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THE SALE OF AUTHORS,

A DIALOGUE,

In Imitation of

LUCIAN's SALE OF PHILOSOPHERS.

By Dr. Campbell.

LONDON:

Printed, and sold by the Booksellers in London and Westminster. 1767.

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PREFACE.

IT was a ſenſible mortification to me ſome few days after the dialogue of Lenipha-nes appeared, when a Gentleman enquired at a bookſeller's what ſort of a thing it was, to hear him anſwered by the boy in the ſhop, that it was ſomething written againſt Dr. J----n. For the ſame reaſon the compliments which I have ſometimes had paid me, by being told, that I had very well ridiculed Dr. J--n, have been received by me, almoſt as coolly, as a Great Man, who is either conſcious of higher accompliſhments, or, what is the ſame thing, thinks he poſſeſſes them, would receive his led Captain, who ſhould tell him, that his Lordſhip danced an excellent Hornpipe, or played a good ſtick on the fiddle. The truth is, my intention was not to ridicule Dr. J--n, whom I have only once ſeen, Virgilium tantum vidi, *nor*

Dr. A---e, nor any other particular Doctor or Writer, but their manner of writing, and expreſſing themſelves on all ſubjects, and the pompous affected ſtyle uſed by them, and many other Doctors and Writers. Boſſu in his ingenious treatiſe on the Epick Poem, imagines that Homer firſt of all fixed upon his moral, and then invented his fable, and choſe his Hero. I cannot conceive this was really the caſe with Homer; neither do I aſſert it was literally ſo at firſt with myſelf. I can only ſay, that I have at laſt conducted my plan, as if it had really been ſo from the beginning. My intention was, that the ſhots fired at the celebrated Doctor, ſhould rebound from him, and fall among his imitators and followers.

In the ſame manner, reſpecting the preſent performance offered to the world, I would not have any one imagine, that the poor Authors are the principal, far leſs the only Butt and object of my ſatire. For inſtance, when the Dramatick Authors are expoſed to ſale, the ridicule is evidently directed againſt the Managers and frequenters of the Theatres; when the Authors

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of real merit are diſmiſſed without being offered to ſale at all, it is levelled againſt the low and trifling taſte of the age in general; when Harris, Hoyle, and Heber are put up, againſt Debauchees and Gameſters, and when the anonymous Authors are ſold, many frauds and artifices of the Bookſellers, or rather Bookmakers, are detected and expoſed. Even in Lexiphanes's Rhapſody ſomething more than a bare ridicule of that ſtyle is intended; it is a faithful picture of a certain claſs in modern life, and two very common characters, that of the vociferating *Grocer, and the* ſentimental *Hibernian, are drawn in it. Beſides, the whole ſtory of the quarrel betwen the Grocer and the Caledonian Emigrant, (ſee Lexiphanes, from page 31 to 37) is deſigned as a ſatire on the animoſity which then ſubſiſted between the two nations, and the ridiculous cauſes which occaſioned it. It may be thought ſomewhat officious in any writer to explain and comment upon his own productions; but perhaps it is now neceſſary, for our Criticks appear*

pear to have become ſo purblind, *by poring over* old Authors, *in which they diſcover meanings they never had, that they are unable to diſcover any meaning at all in modern Authors; not to ſay, that ſuch Criticks who flouriſh moſt at preſent, have ever been more expert at finding out faults or negligencies than beauties, and at the ſame time have more pleaſure in pointing them out. In ſhort, the operation of theſe two performances is what the French call battering* a ricochet, *where the artillery of a beſieging army is directed againſt one part of the fortifications, in ſuch a manner as to ſtrike it obliquely, rebound from thence, and take effect upon another which is intended to be deſtroyed.*

I ſhall now ſay ſomething about the nature of theſe compoſitions. Mr. Hurd, I know, will not allow them the title of Dialogues, which, in imitation of Lucian, I have given them; and even Lucian himſelf, the inventor of this ſort of writing, ſeems to yield it up, in his little tract, entitled, Prometheus. A

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man is certainly very excuſable, when he prefers a ſort of writing which he has himſelf much ſtudied, and ſucceſsfully cultivated, as Mr. Hurd appears to have done with the grave philoſophick dialogue; but, with all ſubmiſſion to that learned and ingenious Gentleman, methinks he departs from his wonted candor and good ſenſe, when, ſpeaking of Lucian, he uſes the expreſſion of the Syrian's frontleſs buffoonery, *and that he treats too harſhly and cavalierly the great Father of Wit and Humour, who, bating his licentiouſneſs in one ſingle article, is a very moral and moſt inſtructive writer. But this is merely a diſpute about words, and it matters not what name any work goes by, provided it be good in its kind. My Lexiphanes is a downright imitation of Lucian's, tho' ſomewhat enlarged; whereas in this, I have taken the hint from him only, and the compoſition and conduct, ſuch as they are, I muſt anſwer for. This work is entirely dramatical; and tho' I never intended, or dreamt of any ſuch thing, I now find, on compariſon, that it is*

almoſt

almoſt a perfect model of the old Greek Comedy, both in its compoſition and plot, and in the characters introduced. For example, in the Clouds *of Ariſtophanes, the plot of Strepſiades is, by learning Sophiſtry from Socrates, to evade the payment of his debts. And here Apollo and Mercury, having run in debt thro' their extravagance, fall upon this ſcheme of catching the Authors and ſelling them, in order to ſatisfy their creditors, and repleniſh their purſes. There is alſo the ſame ſimplicity, and pretty nearly the ſame conduct and preparation of incidents as in the old Comedy. Nay, if what I have called the Epilogue be allowed to be an act, I know not but this* Sale of Authors *may pretend to rank with the modern Comedy. For in the Epilogue, there is an amorous quarrel, an intrigue, and diſappointment, and it concludes with a marriage and plenty of kiſſing, the great hinges on which the Modern Comedy turns. The* dramatis perſonæ *are, likewiſe, preciſely the ſame as in the old Comedy: Real Perſons, Animals, and Pagan Deities, or imaginary Beings. In*

Ariſto-

Ariſtophanes, the Animals frequently act a principal part; here the dogs make a very ſhort appearance, tho' perhaps no impertinent one, ſeeing they interrupt the recital of one of Mr. G---s Prologues. Mercury has ever been a favourite character with all writers in the Dramatick way, and perhaps there never was one better calculated for Comedy: a ſuperior Being who cheats, ſteals, and lies, without ſhame or ſcruple, but is at the ſame time ſo good-humoured, ſocial, and friendly withal, that we could not but like him for an occaſional companion; though a wiſe man would take care how he played at Cards,*

* The following is the amiable character given of Mercury by Jupiter, in his ſpeech to him, in the 24th Iliad, as tranſlated by Mr. Pope.

Then thus to Hermes. Thou whoſe conſtant cares
Still ſuccour Mortals, and attend their pray'rs,
Behold an object, to thy charge conſign'd,
If ever pity touch'd thee for Mankind.

But this is at beſt a beautiful paraphraſe, for Homer's literal meaning is, "that it is Mercury's "greateſt delight to aſſiſt mankind in the quality of "their friend and companion,"

or had any pecuniary connections with him. Apollo, tho' as extravagant and neceſſitous as Mercury, nay equally willing to profit by the foibles of his cuſtomers, is yet repreſented as having a great deal of ſincerity, and much more honour than his partner; ſuch are the lights and colours wherein I have endeavoured to paint my two Deities: and certainly people in the firſt ages of Greece and Rome muſt have been extremely happy in the belief of their religion, there is ſomething ſo very pleaſant and good-humoured in its conſtruction, eſpecially as it peoples all nature with ſuperior Beings ever diſpoſed to be the friends and ſometimes the companions of mankind.

As for the real characters, which, in conformity to the Old Comedy are introduced, they are moſt of them ſo well known, that the Reader will at once perceive whether they are treated with juſtice, or properly repreſented. I have, however, carefully avoided the licentiouſneſs of Ariſtophanes; and, I perſuade myſelf, that in the following performance, there

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is nothing that makes the leaſt approach to abuſe or a libel, nothing which bears the leaſt alluſion to any private misfortune or perſonal defect: in ſhort, there is nothing ridiculed in it, but what can and ought to be amended; I mean the arrogance, vanity, and affectation of Authors; and the avarice, ignorance, and ſelf-ſufficience of Theatrical Managers. Suppoſing all Authors to be on a level, and gentlemen alike, and indeed they are ſo in a manner, for of the very few that have ſet up avowedly for Dictators among them, ſcarce one hath ſucceeded; I ſay, on ſuch a ſuppoſition, there is hardly any thing ſaid in the following pages, which, in a free and jocoſe company, one Gentleman could well take amiſs in another, far leſs be warranted in calling him to an account for it. Yet, I muſt confeſs, that in the repreſentation of the two firſt characters produced on Mercury's Auction table, there is more of the ſpirit of Ariſtophanes than I could wiſh, eſpecially, as both Mr. G--- and Mr. M--- are authors of

merit, and indeed have great modeſty in that capacity; and if, perhaps, they have been celebrated more than I think they deſerve, it has been their good fortune not their fault. Perhaps I could have wiſhed, that the following paſſage, Knock him off; We ſhall get no more for him; and I do not know that he is worth much more, *had been put in Mercury's mouth, who is ſeldom if ever ſincere, rather than in Apollo's, who is always ſincere, except, when he perſuades, or rather ſuffers the Bookſellers to believe, that he has contracted a certain diſtemper in order to avoid drinking. As for the reſt, when theſe Gentlemen reflect on the patience and good Humour wherewith the divine Socrates bore being ſhewn to the Athenian people, on the nobleſt theatre that ever was in the world, ſuſpended in a baſket, and talking the utmoſt nonſenſe and blaſphemy, it is to be hoped that neither of them will be mortally offended at being exhibited on an imaginary Auction table, talking nothing incongruous to their characters, though the one*

be

be in a blanket or watchman's coat, and the other, after breakfasting on pease-meal and whisky, in a Fillabeg. As for the first, He might have been omitted, but the other was necessary to my plan, intending, thro' him, to ridicule a certain sort of national partiality, and likewise to introduce a more poignant ridicule of those heats and animosities, which the two characters next introduced were the principal instruments of raising between two people, whom providence certainly designed for one, and who had long been really united. I wish the motives for the conduct of either of those Gentlemen had been no worse than what Mercury openly avows to the Scotsman for his, namely, to see if he could cheat them out of some o' their siller. *Such a ridicule was highly seasonable at the time that part of the dialogue was first written, during the height of those disputes, and indeed cannot be unseasonable now.*

But none surely can take much amiss any liberties I have taken, when I have not even hesitated to pass a Joke on a Gentleman who

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is not only the beſt and warmeſt friend I myſelf have in the world, but alſo one of the worthieſt and moſt benevolent men in it. When Mercury tells the Highland Homer, that, He will ſpeak a gude word for him to ane he kens fu' weel, a dear friend and unco great admirer of his, a governor of ane o' the new provinces, and ſae he might gang o'uer wi' him as a Secretary, *(ſee* the Sale of Authors, *page* 27) *it is eaſily ſeen that no body can be meant except his Excellency* GEORGE JOHNSTONE, *Eſq; late Governor of Penſacola. In fact, I do mean him, and I remember when I had the happineſs to live with that Gentleman ſome years ago, we uſed to have many diſputes about the nature and excellence of Oſſian's Poems, perhaps from a ſpirit of oppoſition not uncommon, He extolling them more than he might really think they deſerved, and I depreciating them as much, nay affirming I would not be bribed to read them. Which is indeed pretty nearly the caſe; for with all their merit in other reſpects, ſuch is their ſameneſs and uniformity, being all writ in the Ballad*

lard ſtrain, that nothing can be more tireſome and diſguſtful to me; and I may be well excuſed for ſaying ſo, when the Iliad itſelf now appears ſomewhat tedious from the ſame cauſe. I do not mention this by way of making any apology to this Gentleman. I know that is altogether ſuperfluous; for ſuch is his Good Humour, he is as incapable of taking amiſs any thing within the bounds of decency, intended for a Jeſt, as, ſuch is his Philanthropy, of witholding his good offices from any one, who he thinks deſerves them, and he knows wants them. I only beg that he would permit me to incribe this performance to him, as a teſtimony of my gratitude for the many favours he has conferred on me, the many which he has frankly offered me, and which I have been obliged to decline, and the good offices which I know he will always be diſpoſed, and is even now endeavouring to do me.

P. S.

P. S. As I believe there are few but literal errors in the following pages, I have not troubled myself with an Errata, only desiring the Reader to allow for such as he may observe. The candid Reviewers, however, are welcome to impute quæranda, *page* 64, *instead of* quærenda, *as also, if they will,* prima, *for* primum, *to my ignorance of the Latin tongue, as they have already imputed* had became, *for* had become, *to my ignorance of the English.*

THE

THE SALE of AUTHORS; A DIALOGUE.

SCENE I.

The SPEAKERS,

APOLLO, MERCURY, AUTHORS.

APOLLO.

WELL, Mercury, you have got the uſe of Langford's room I ſee. You ſupply his place to day, and are ready with your inſtrument in your hand: But pray where are the Authors? And have you advertiſed this ſale in all the papers as I ordered you?

MERCURY.

It appears this morning in the front of the Daily Advertiſer. I was too late to get it into the reſt of the papers, and was forced to pay a crown for this. I wiſh we may make our own money again. As for the Authors they are all in the next room, tag, rag, and bobtail; I have locked them up and placed a centry at the door, for fear they ſhould break out and make their eſcape. Truly, Apollo, I have had a very troubleſome jobb of it. I don't remember having ever been ſo much harraſſed in driving a pack of the moſt refractory ghoſts to the banks of the river Styx, as in gathering together thoſe confounded Authors. 'Tis true, I eaſily found out the houſekeepers, and thoſe who put names to their writings. I heard of them at their bookſellers, and from the waiters of the coffee-houſes they frequent; but it was with great difficulty I caught them, and was obliged to employ various ſtratagems for that purpoſe. They are a decent good looking ſort of people enough, and are tolerably well dreſſed, all except one, a very eminent poet I aſſure you, and who has as fine clothes as the beſt

of

of them, yet has nothing about him at preſent to cover his nakedneſs except a watchman's great coat, the reaſon of which you ſhall be acquainted with when he comes under the hammer.

APOLLO.

Then we muſt ſell him firſt of all, leſt he catch cold this bitter weather. But I hope you have not penned up the decent well-dreſt folks, in the ſame room with the ragged anonymous Authors.

MERCURY.

I have indeed; and I could not help it. But really 'tis a perfect ſhame it ſhould be ſo. Well may you call them ragged. You never ſaw ſuch a parcel of dirty raggamuffins ſince you were a God. Theſe anonymous Authors as you call them, I mean Newsgatherers, Magazine-mongers, Muſeum-compilers, Dictionary-writers, Miſcellany-brokers, Index-makers, Reviewers, Journaliſts, French-tranſlators, and Poets of all ſorts, ſizes, and denominations; you cannot conceive the trouble and pains it has coſt me to get together this collection of them. I found I could make nothing of

the buſineſs by myſelf, though from my different occupations of Pimp, Thief, Thief-taker, and Ghoſt-driver, you may believe me pretty well acquainted with moſt of the dark nooks and bye-lanes in town. In ſhort, I was e'en forced to employ the aſſiſtance of Bailiffs and their Followers; at laſt I was obliged to hire ſome of my brother's gang, I mean the Thief-takers, at the blind J-ſt-ce's in B--Street. By their means, I have ferretted out ſome very eminent Authors I give you my word, from places I could hardly conceive inhabited by any mortal Being; far leſs by inſtructors of mankind, correctors of laws, improvers of morals, judges in literature, and reformers of ſtate.

APOLLO.

'Tis an old ſaying, Mercury, ſet a thief to catch a thief. I hope you have got no thieves among your Authors; That might bring us into a ſcrape. 'Tis certain they come from very ſuſpicious places, and you have employed very ſuſpicious perſons to catch them.

MERCURY.

That I could not help: you have them as I got them. But faith I believe none of them are what you can really call thieves; and that they never ſtole any thing except lines and ſentences, which by the bye is not made penal as yet by any ſtatute I know of. In truth they appear to be too wretched to follow any buſineſs but writing.

APOLLO.

Do bring them out, however, and let us take a view of them; here are no company come as yet, and 'twill be ſome time before the ſale begins.

MERCURY.

I muſt beg in the firſt place you would order them a double dram apiece. When I left them they were making bitter complaints of the coldneſs of the morning and the rawneſs of their ſtomachs. They have all got ſuch a tremulous paralytick motion in their arms, that I hardly think, till their nerves are ſomewhat ſortified by Holland's, they will be able to ſign their own names, far leſs write a letter for a news-paper, or a paſtoral tale for a magazine.

APOLLO.

APOLLO.

Well, you'll ſend for a gallon of Engliſh Gin to the alehouſe under the piazzas: that will be good enough for them. But produce them in the mean time.

(*Here* Mercury *brings out the anonymous Authors, who all paſs in review before* Apollo.)

APOLLO.

O Heavens, what a ſet of ſcarecrows! You, Sir, you with the ruffles, what ſort of writing do you deal in?

AUTHOR.

In poetry, may it pleaſe your Godſhip. I am poſſeſſed of great epic, tragic, comic, paſtoral and pindaric powers; I write ſonnets, epigrams, acroſtics, rebuſſes,——

APOLLO.

Pray Mr. Rebus-writer, how come you to make ſuch a motley appearance? Could not you afford yourſelf a clean cravat to your ruffled ſhirt?

MERCURY.

My good brother, how wide are you of the matter! The truth is, he has no ſhirt at

at all, and what you miſtake for ruffles is only a piece of white paper cut into that ſhape *.

APOLLO.

This will never do. We ſhall be all our expences out of pocket, even to the Gin itſelf. Theſe Tatterdemallions, take them all together, will not fetch ſo much as Diogenes did at Jupiter's ſale of philoſophers†. I cannot myſelf endure the ſight of them in this pickle. In ſhort, we ſhall be totally ruined if we cannot contrive to rig them out ſomewhat decently. See, Mercury, that they be well guarded, and order them to be driven to our lodgings at the bagnio; there let them be waſh'd, ſcrubb'd, and bruſh'd; and thoſe you ſuſpect to be louſy, get their heads ſhaved, and furniſh them with tye-wigs from Middle-Row; at the ſame time ſend to Monmouth-Street for all manner of ſecond-hand clothes, ſuch as hats, coats, ſhoes, ſtockings, and ſo forth, and let them be fitted on as well as the ſhortneſs of our

* For this anecdote, ſee Cibber's Lives of the Poets.

† See Lucian, where Diogenes was ſold for two Oboli, about two-pence halfpenny.

time

time will allow. Beſides, you'll give each of them a halfpenny roll along with their Gin. Poor ſouls, who knows when they broke their faſt!

MERCURY.

All ſhall be done as you deſire.

APOLLO.

In the mean time aſk what the gentlemen within, I mean your genteel Authors, chuſe for breakfaſt. We muſt keep them in good humour as well as we can. Perhaps they may ſell the better.

MERCURY.

Dr. H---- chuſes ſome of his own tincture of Valerian, and a little of his Balſam of Honey. Mr. J-----n requires a pot of convivial Burton ale, as he calls it, with a warm toaſt and nutmeg in it, for he complains of being terribly griped this morning. Mr. C----l, being a great admirer of the German Hero, as well as encourager of the manufactories of Old England, is for a mug of warm Pruſſian purl. Moſt of the reſt will be contented with coffee, tea, or chocolate. I have already ordered all theſe things

things to be ſent in, together with the news-papers. Only Mr. M---n, a Highlander, one juſt now caught, a very *ſignal* epic poet I am told, muſt have a bannock of peaſe-meal * and a Scotch pint of Scotch whiſky (you muſt know a Scotch pint is two Engliſh quarts) otherwiſe he ſays he can't breakfaſt at all. Beſides, I had almoſt forgot it, Mr. G---- the great poet, in the watchman's coat, muſt have ſome apricot marmalade, and a pair of ſilver tea tongs.

APOLLO.

What the plague, does he eat ſilver!

MERCURY.

O no. But the tongs are a very neceſſary implement with Him. He is a little preſſed juſt now, and in a word cannot *mingere* without them. *Indignatur nempe manum ſuam caſtam et puram fœdari attrectatione*-----.

APOLLO.

Say no more. I underſtand you. I profeſs a wonderful and a moſt laudable deli-

* A cake made of peaſe flour uſed in Scotland, chiefly in the Highlands.

cacy. I hope we ſhall find a good merchant for him, among the ladies of quality.

MERCURY.

I queſtion much whether that delicacy as you call it, will recommend him to their notice: On the whole, I am afraid we ſhall bring our hogs to a bad market. I have no great hopes, to tell you the truth, from this buſineſs.

APOLLO.

There's no help for it. Now we are in, we muſt make the beſt of a bad bargain, as the ſaying is. Tho' I hope, Mercury, you will not be ſcrupulous, but when you ſet your Authors up to ſale, ſhew them out to the beſt Advantage, giving them all the praiſes and applauſes you can think of, and all the great and good qualities that come into your head, no matter how juſt, or whether they deſerve it or no.

MERCURY.

Truſt me for that. What! don't you know I'm an old auctioneer?

End of the firſt Scene.

SCENE II.

SPEAKERS.

CRYER, APOLLO, MERCURY, BOOKSELLERS, AUTHORS, AUDIENCE, MANAGERS, DOGS.

CRYER.

AUTHORS ſelling by auction. Walk in gentlemen and ladies. Selling by auction. Authors ſelling by Auction.

APOLLO.

Husband your breath a little, my friend.-'Tis but juſt twelve yet, and we ſhall not have much company till towards one.---- I am very glad, Mercury, to hear the anonymous Authors are ſo much mended in their appearance. But alas! poor Doctor J-------n. What we gain by theſe, I am afraid, we ſhall loſe, and much more by Him. Poor man! what a piteous taking he has been in. I ſuſpect ſome raſcal has poiſoned him with a view to his penſion.

MERCURY.

You remember I told you he complained of the gripes this morning. What! is he actually dead?

APOLLO.

Not quite. But he is dead to us. You can't imagine what a pickle he has left the water cloſet in. All his excellent Ramblers, as they are called, are gone thro' him, quite thro'.

MERCURY.

Well, I now ſuſpect the cauſe. I was told the whole affair this forenoon. But did he receive no benefit from his convivial Burton? I left him at that and his toaſt and nutmeg.

APOLLO.

Juſt the reverſe. He had no ſooner ate his breakfaſt than he fell grievouſly ill. I was ſent for; I found him ſpeechleſs, all over in a cold ſweat, his pulſe quite gone, and afflicted with a moſt terrible and continued purging. This latter ſymptom being the moſt dangerous and the cauſe of all the reſt, I uſed my utmoſt endeavours to ſtop it, and with great difficulty ſucceeded at laſt. About an hour before I left him he had recovered his ſpeech. But alas! he is no more the man he was. He ſpeaks now like other people, not as he uſed to do, as if it were out of a book. Were he to write, I

ſuppoſe

ſuppoſe it would be in the ſame manner. So we need not ſet him up to ſale; for we ſhould get nothing for him. Beſides, he is ſuch a pitiable object. What excuſe ſhall we make, ſhould the good company call for him, as undoubtedly they will?

MERCURY.

Why, tell 'em the truth, to be ſure; and as I am acquainted with the whole buſineſs, let me be the ſpokeſman.-----But do you know what expence the anonymous authors will put us to, before we can diſpoſe of one of 'em.---Nay, you need not wonder, and hold up your hands, and caſt up your eyes, in the manner you do. 'Tis already done, and we are already engaged for a greater ſum by much, and all on Their account, than the expence of catching them, a breakfaſt, of Gin and Half-penny Rolls, waſhing, ſcrubbing, louſing, and even cloathing 'em will amount to.

APOLLO.

Mercury, could I any way do without you, I would abſolutely diſſolve the partnerſhip this moment. You will ruin us with your

your mad projects and extravagance. Unleſs we make a quick retreat to Olympus, we ſhall be arreſted and lie rotting in a goal. You know it was much againſt my inclination to have any thing to do with theſe anonymous Authors. I always ſaid they were nothing but lumber, and that we ſhould never get any good by them. But pray what have you done?

MERCURY.

Nay, I began to be of the ſame opinion, and to repent of it myſelf. But it was too late to draw back. In ſhort, I was informed by an intimate acquaintance, one thoroughly verſed in theſe matters, that we could expect nothing for ſuch Authors, from Patrons, Miniſters of State, Noblemen, Gentlemen or Ladies of Quality; and that all our market for them muſt lie among the Bookſellers. I was told beſides, that theſe Bookſellers would not bid ſo much as one farthing, till their bellies were filled with the beſt of victuals, and their heads well heated with the beſt of liquors. So, what do you think I do? I go to Tomkins's, at the Shakeſpeare, where you may be thankful

ful we have ſtill ſome credit, and order him to provide a magnificent entertainment, with all the niceties and delicacies he can think of, to be ready at four o'clock; together with plenty of Punch, a beverage more delicious than our Nectar, and the beſt ſorts of wines. To this I propoſe inviting the Bookſellers, as ſoon as our genteel Authors ſhall be ſold off, and our great Company diſmiſſed.

APOLLO.

P-x take 'em, they will ſtuff and ſwill more than as many Deputies and Common-Councilmen at a City feaſt.

MERCURY.

Nay, never grudge ſuch cuſtomers a belly-full. The heartier they eat and drink, the better. They will bid the more freely. Could we contrive to make them drunk, and keep ourſelves ſomewhat ſober, I doubt not but we may reimburſe ourſelves of the expences we have laid out on the Anonymous Authors, which is all we can in reaſon hope for. Do You pretend to have caught the faſhionable diſtemper, and leave

Me

Me to fight off as well as I can. But I have not been idle otherwiſe, I have been as buſy among theſe Authors, as you have been with Doctor J----n, and to better purpoſe. I have picked and aſſorted them, and put them up in ſo many diſtinct lots and parcels, diſtinguiſhing every parcel by a label, marked Number One, Two, Three, and ſo on. I have got above a dozen ſets of Magazine-mongers, near as many News-mongers, two or three ſets of Reviewers, or periodical Criticks, and I know not how many parcels of Hiſtorians, Voyagers, Travellers, Biographers, Commentators on the Bible, Compilers of Dictionaries of Lanuages, Arts and Sciences, Index-makers, and political Pamphleteers, who anſwer themſelves, and write on both ſides the queſtion. In ſhort, I have got the compleateſt and fulleſt aſſortment of Authors that ever were collected together, and all of great eminence in their ſeveral callings, as I am told. I call every ſeparate parcel a Society of Gentlemen; (but ſuch Gentlemen, God wot!) after the example of the Bookſellers in their title pages. As for the Rubbiſh and Refuſe, as there al-

ways

ways muſt be ſome among ſo many, I have put them all in one parcel, and by the advice of my friend, have marked it with the number Forty-Five, which number he tells me the Engliſh are exceſſively fond of, and think ſomething peculiarly lucky annexed to it. He ſays, this parcel may fetch more on that very account than all the reſt. In a word, Apollo, I have omitted nothing, but have done every thing in my power, for our common Intereſt. And were I not an immortal God, I would cry out with Cato in the Play,

'Tis not in Mortals to command ſucceſs,
But we'll do more, Apollo, we'll deſerve it.

APOLLO.

Well, Mercury, have patience; we ſhall ſee. But the company are aſſembling very faſt. Cryer, do you make proclamation of the ſale, and you, Mercury, order your Authors to be produced with all poſſible expedition.

CRYER.

Authors ſelling by auction! Gentlemen and ladies walk in. Selling by auction. Authors ſelling by auction!

MERCURY.

Gentlemen and ladies, pleaſe to walk in and be ſeated. We are juſt going to *exhibit* *. To-day we put up to ſale a choice, a curious, and moſt valuable *aſſemblage* of Authors. Of Authors in all branches of literature, in all arts, ſciences, profeſſions, and languages, ready and prepared at an hour's warning, to write on any ſubject and on any ſide of the queſtion. From them, gentlemen, you will have no pages of *inanity*. They are none of the Granvilles and Sheffields of former times. They are poſſeſſed of the moſt extenſive and multifarious powers of ſtyle and compoſition. They have refined and poliſhed the Engliſh language to its utmoſt perfection of purity and elegancy. They have expulſed all licentious idioms, colloquial barbariſms, and irregular combinations, and have added greatly to the harmony of its cadence. Gentlemen and ladies, they are to be diſ-

* It is to be obſerved, that in this ſcene Mercury ſometimes ſpeaks a different language from what he uſes in the firſt. In this he often ſpeaks, if I may expreſs myſelf ſo, in the Lexiphanic ſtyle, in order to conform the better to the prevailing taſte of his hearers. See the dialogue, intitled LEXIPHANES.

poſed

poſed of for no fault or imperfection, I give you my word and honour, nay, am ready to ſwear it by the river Styx. On the contrary, every Author when ſet up to ſale, ſhall exhibit, if required, a ſpecimen of his powers. The truth is, Apollo, the inventor, proprietor, and patentee of wit, genius, and literature, being determined to retire and leave off buſineſs entirely, is willing to diſpoſe of his ſtock in trade to the beſt advantage.——You, Waiter, bring out the poet in the watchman's coat, and ſet him on the table.——Gentlemen and ladies, the firſt Author we exhibit is a poet of ſignal celebrity, and eminently poſſeſſed of plaintive powers.

BOOKSELLERS.

Before the auction begins, we ſhould be glad to be informed of the conditions of ſale.

APOLLO.

Your demand, gentlemen, is nothing but reaſonable, and ſhall be immediately complied with.

The conditions of our ſale, vary according to the nature of the commodities we may diſ-

poſe of, the contracts by which they are bought, and the perſons who are the buyers. As for You Bookſellers, who I preſume purchaſe in order to ſell again, and make a profit by your ventures, it is expected you either pay ready money, or give notes of hand with ſecurity if required. Whatever Bookſeller buys an Author, or a ſet of Authors, commonly called in your title pages a Society of Gentlemen, for leſs than ten pounds, ſhall pay the caſh down on the nail. If he purchaſe above ten pounds worth of Authors, but leſs than fifty, his note of hand payable three months after date will be accepted; if between fifty and an hundred, ſix months credit will be allowed him; and for all ſums above that, twelve months credit, provided ſufficient and ample ſecurity be given in before delivery of the goods. Theſe, Gentlemen, are pretty nearly the ſame conditions you obſerve amongſt yourſelves at your own ſales. As for thoſe who purchaſe an Author by contributing a common ſtock, or what is called ſubſcription, They are deſired to pay their money immediately, for the Author as ſoon as the ſubſcription is cloſed, will be

delivered

delivered up to them. Thoſe great men, miniſters of ſtate, and royal favourites, who chuſe to buy up Authors, with biſhopricks, livings, places and penſions, are to underſtand, their words of honour will be taken for the performance of their promiſes, provided they promiſe large enough, and have intereſt to perform. Now, Mercury, you may proceed with the ſale.

MERCURY.

Here, gentlemen and ladies, we exhibit the *ſweetly plaintive* G---*, the divine Author of Elegies on a Church-yard, and a Cat; who bids for the *ſweetly plaintive* G---?

APOLLO.

I ſee this good company are not a little ſurpriſed, that ſo eminent a poet is wrapt up in a watchman's coat. Pray, Mercury, inform them how it happened. Beſides, I am really curious to know it myſelf.

MERCURY.

You muſt know, having made many unſucceſsful attempts to catch this great poet, I was at laſt obliged to have recourſe to

* An epithet generally given him in the Reviews.

ſtratagem.

ſtratagem. Though he has a great deal of poetical fire, nobody indeed more, yet is he extremely afraid of culinary fire, and keeps conſtantly by him a ladder of ropes to guard againſt all accidents of that ſort. Knowing this, I hired ſome watchmen to raiſe the alarm of fire below his windows. Immediately the windows were ſeen to open, and the Poet deſcending in his ſhirt by his ladder *. Thus we caught him at laſt, and one of the watchmen, to prevent his nerves being totally benumbed by frigorific torpor, lent him his great coat. Here you have him, watchman's coat, ladder of ropes, ſilver tea-tongs and all. Ladies, if you knew what uſe he makes of the tongs, you would all ſtrive with one another who ſhould bid moſt.

APOLLO.

You talk too much, Mercury; you'll never have done at this rate. Let the Poet exhibit a *ſpecimen* of *his powers*.

* The ſtories of the fire and ladder, and ſilver tea-tongs, are reported, though perhaps they have no other foundation than what may juſtify a harmleſs pleaſantry, in a work of this ſort, which attacks nothing but ridiculous oddities, affectation, and arrogance.

Mr. G---.

Mr. G--y.

The Curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herds wind ſlowly o'er the lea,
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkneſs and to me.

MERCURY.

Admirably ſimple and elegant! Uniververſally natural, Dorick, and paſtoral!

With kiltit coats when linkan o'er the lea,
I ſaw my Meg, but Maggie ſaw nae me.

You ſee, gentlemen, he imitates Allan Ramſay, the Prince of Paſtoral Poets. *Weary way, plowman plods.* Happy alliteration! This line is worth a whole Dryden's Ode for St. Cecilia. Such are his Elegiac, now for his Pindarick *Powers.*

Mr. G--y.

Ruin ſeize thee Ruthleſs King!

MERCURY.

Better and better ſtill. Only obſerve with what ſublimity he has expreſſed the very vulgar phraſe of Devil take ye. Come, who bids moſt money for the *ſweetly plaintive* G--y?

BOOKSELLER.

Half a guinea for him.

MERCURY.

Fie, Mr. ---- fie for ſhame. Do but conſider what a figure his Poems make in your admirable collection. Half a guinea only. Why, the ladder of ropes and ſilver tongs are worth the money. Shall then all his plaintive poetical *powers* go for nothing!

BOOKSELLER.

Poetry is a mere drug now-a-days. It ſeldom pays for paper, print, and advertiſing. That I know both to my coſt and ſorrow.

APOLLO (*aſide to* MERCURY.)

Knock him off. We ſhall get no more for him; and I do not know that he is worth much more.

MERCURY.

The ſweetly-plaintive Grey a going for half a guinea. A-going a-going, once, twice, thrice.

(*Here* Mercury *ſtrikes his hammer.*)

BOOKSELLER.

Here's your money.

APOLLO.

APOLLO.

And there's your Poet. (*Aſide to* Mercury.) Set up in the next place, the Highlander, the epic Poet; I have forgot his name, but he breakfaſted on peaſe-meal and whiſky. I ſee a good many Scotch people here. Perhaps they'll bid for the honour of their country.

MERCURY.

Here, gentlemen, is a Poet for you. He is the Highland Homer. But far ſuperior to the Grecian. Conſult a *ſweet morſel of criticiſm* *, compoſed by one of his own countrymen, and you will ſoon be convinced of this truth. I ſhall only ſay, were he as good as he was difficult to catch, a better Poet never was brought to market. I hunted him for ſix days in the Highland hills, and often I thought I had him, but as often *his buſhy hair whiſtling in the wind, He burſt from me like the Hum of a Song* †, *or, dark, in a blaſt, like the Vapour of reedy Lego* ‡.

* See Elements of Criticiſm.

† Temora, page 72.

‡ Ibid, page 60.

At laſt I catched him as he was abſorbed in a poetical extacy. Ladies, he is juſt caught upon my honour; his tail is not cut yet. Shall I lift up his Fillabeg and ſhew you?

APOLLO.

For ſhame, Mercury. Is this talk for ladies? You make them bluſh?

MERCURY.

I ſee a hantell of his ain cuntry fôk here; a hantell braw Scotch laads and bonny Scotch laſſies. What, winna ye ſubſcribe now, winna ye birle your bawbees for the honour of your ain cuntry, and the gude of your ain cuntryman?

SCOTSMEN.

Ay, Ay, we'll aw ſubſcribe, we'll aw ſubſcribe.

MERCURY.

Weel then caſt in your placks and bawbees into Apollo's haunds there, and when you've caſten in enugh, you may e'en tak him hame wi' ye agen, gin ye like yourſells.

M'C------N.

Na, na, I wad like it mukle better, giff I were to be *relegated* * amang the Che-

* See the Preface to Temora.

rokees

rokees and the Chactaws o' North America, whare I cud ſtudy the manners of thae fôk; which I'm tald are highly epical, and ſae I wad e'en write a new original epic Poem.

MERCURY.

Weel, weel maun, giff ye dinna like to gang hame agen to your ain cuntry before you ſee a little mair o' the warld firſt, ne'er fawſh your head about the matter; I'll ſpeak a gude word for you to ane you ken fu' weel, a dear friend and great admirer o' yours, a governor of ane o' the new provinces, and ſae you may gang o'ur wi' him as a ſecretary. Pray, Apollo, how goes the ſubſcription on.

APOLLO.

O wonderfully well. We have got enough by him; more than I expected. You may diſmiſs him.

MERCURY.

O wow, but I am unco fain to hear it. I did nae think You Scotch bodies wad hae parted wi' your ſiller ſae reddily. Now ye may tâk your Poet awa wi' ye, but be ſure mâke mickle o' him.

APOLLO.

So much for the honour of Scotland. Now, gentlemen, for the honour of Old England. Mercury, ſet up Mr. W----.

ENGLISHMEN.

W---- and Liberty. Hurra.

MERCURY.

Ay, gentlemen, well may you huzza him. Here is the champion of Old England, the martyr for Liberty. Here is the celebrated Author of the North Briton, who has ſo damnably mauled your enemies the Scots, thoſe louſy, beggarly raſcallions, that come up in ſuch flocks, ſcratching themſelves all the way, (Mercury *here ſpeaks aſide to ſome Scotsmen near him, who ſeem to be out of humour and growing angry*, Hout awa Laads, ne'er faſh yourſells about ony thing that I'm ſaying. I dinna think as I ſpeak, and its only a copy o' my countenance to curry favour wi' thae fat-gutted, thick-headed Engliſh pock-puddings, and to ſee if I can cheat them out o' ſome of their ſiller.) I ſay, gentlemen, thoſe ragged, ſcabbed, itching oatmeal-eating Scotſmen, that come up to town by whole waggon loads at a time, like droves

of-

of their own cattle, ſcratching and ſcrubbing themſelves at every poſt they meet with, in order to take the bread out of your mouths and deſtroy your precious liberties. Here, gentlemen, who bids money for W---- and Liberty. He's a very ugly fellow, indeed, and ſquints moſt horribly, but we ſhall not abate one farthing of his price on that account; for the beauty of his genius and the virtues of his patriotic heart, make more than amends for all.

ENGLISHMEN.

W---- and Liberty, huzza!

MERCURY.

Well done, gentlemen, it rejoices me exceedingly to hear you huzza ſo heartily. That adds greatly to the ſtrength of your cauſe. But you muſt do more than that. You muſt bid money, you muſt even part with money for W---- and Liberty: otherwiſe you'll oblige me to ſing the chorus of the new ſong. *Ah! poor Liberty!* What! bid no money for the Martyr of Liberty, who was ſo lately thrown into the Tower as if he had been a Scotch rebel, for the mereſt

triſle

trifle in the world, only for abuſing his ſovereign, and giving him the Lie publicly, which you know has been the privilege and birthright of all true-born Engliſhmen time out of mind. Why, it is in *Magna Charta.*

ENGLISMEN.

W----- and Liberty. Hurra.

MERCURY.

Still huzzaing, gentlemen, and no more! No money!

Ah! poor Liberty!
W----- and Liberty!
W----- and Liberty ah!

(Mercury *ſings this in a very melancholy tone.)*

WILKES.

You are in the right, gentlemen. Liberty is not to be bought. It is only to be fought for, and wrote for, and drank for, and huzza'd for. Nor am I, a freeborn Engliſhman, to be ſold. But as I have ſuffered greatly by this illegal ſtep of the adminiſtration, you may ſubſcribe. I am now printing at my own houſe in Great George-Street, a full account of all the proceedings of the admini-

adminiſtration againſt me. The price is one guinea, to be paid at ſubſcribing.

MERCURY.

Ay, ay. Subſcribe by all means. That will do as well, and now I think on't much better. Apollo has opened the ſubſcription, gentlemen, and is ready to receive your money. W----- and Liberty for a guinea! a great penn'orth. In the mean time we ſhall put up to ſale, Mr. W----'s great aſſociate and fellow labourer in the cauſe of Liberty. I mean the reverend Mr. Ch-----ll. Waiter, bring forth Mr. Ch----ll, provided he has drank out his pot of porter, and ſet him on the table with Mr. W-----.---Now, gentlemen, there's a brace of patriots for you, coupled together like a pair of rabbits, a fat one and a lean one. Apollo, whilſt you are taking in ſubſcriptions for the one, I ſhall put the other up to auction if you pleaſe.---Come, Mr. Ch----ll, *exhibit* a *ſpecimen* of your *powers* from the *Prophecy of Famine*, or any of your other ſublime compoſitions. But let it be ſomething very bitter again the Scotch.

Mr.

Mr. CH----LL, (*addreſſing himſelf to* Mr. W----S.

Oft have I heard thee mourn the wretched lot
Of the poor, mean, deſpis'd, inſulted SCOT,
Who ſtarves at home, or practiſes, through fear
Of ſtarving, arts which damn all conſcience here.
The SCOTS are poor, cries ſurly Engliſh pride;
True is the charge, nor by themſelves denied.
Are they not then in ſtricteſt reaſon clear,
Who wiſely come to mend their fortunes here?
If, by low ſupple arts ſucceſsful grown,
They ſapp'd our vigour to increaſe their own,
If, mean in want, and inſolent in pow'r,
They only fawn'd more ſurely to devour,
Rous'd by ſuch wrongs ſhould Reaſon take alarm,
And e'en the MUSE for public ſafety arm;
But if they own ingenuous Virtue's ſway,
And follow where true Honour points the way,
If they revere the hand by which they're fed,
And bleſs the donors for their daily bread,
Or by vaſt debts of higher import bound,
Are always humble, always grateful found,
If they, directed by PAUL's holy pen,
Become diſcreetly all things to all men,
That all men may become all things to them,
Envy may hate, but Juſtice can't condemn.
"Into our places, ſtates, and beds they creep."
They've ſenſe to get what we want ſenſe to keep.

MERCURY.

Well, gentlemen, you ſee how he has mauled 'em; you ſee how he has threſhed theſe

theſe louſy, raſcally, ſcabby enemies of yours. But this is only with his pen, he ſhall do as much, nay more with his fiſt: come, he ſhall box any Scotchman of 'em all for a hundred guineas of my money, and I ſay done firſt. But remember I bar ſharps and flats, I mean ſwords and piſtols; fiſts and quills are the only weapons we deal in. He is *tam Marte quam Mercurio, tam Venere quam Bacchо.* In a word, he ſhall rhyme and bruiſe, and drink, and do ſomething elſe with any one of you.---Gentlemen, I cannot in reaſon let this great poet and bruiſer go for leſs than a hundred pieces. However, I ſhall put him up at fifty.---Fifty guineas for Mr. Ch-----ll. Come, who bids more?---- What all ſilent! Well, I ſhall put him up at what you will. Twenty, Ten, or Five.--- Nobody bid!

AUDIENCE.

Half a crown for him.

MERCURY.

Paſſion of my heart! what is this! Why, gentlemen, you amaze me, you perfectly diſtract me. Half a crown only for ſo great a Poet and Patriot: Beſides, you are all bidders, and do you expect I ſhall act the

part of a butcher and cut him up as if he were a ſlaughtered ox, into boiling and roaſting pieces of half a crown each?

AUDIENCE.

No, no, we do not mean that. We ſay, we will give half a crown for the offspring and production of his brain, when divided and cut out into copies.

MERCURY.

Ay, now I begin to underſtand you; and you have ſomewhat revived me. So, if I take you right, you are each of you to give half a crown for his Roſciad, or Night, or Prophecy of Famine -----

AUDIENCE.

You take us right. That is our intention.

MERCURY.

For his Times, his Conference, his Farewel, his Duelliſt ----

AUDIENCE.

Ay, and for every book of his Ghoſt and Gotham, tho' it ſhould conſiſt of only five hundred lines.

MERCURY.

And tho' they ſhould be ever ſo crude and incorrect and indigeſted: In a word, as wet from

from the brain as from the preſs?

AUDIENCE.

That is nothing to us, he has got a name, and we ſhall buy every thing he puts forth to ſell.

MERCURY.

Well, gentlemen, if You are ſatisfied, We have reaſon to be ſo. I foreſee we ſhall make a pretty penny of you. But all in good time. And now, Mr. Ch----ll, be adviſed by me as a friend. Take them in their preſent humour, and make hay while the ſun ſhines. Scribble, publiſh as faſt as ever you can. For if you continue to write as incorrectly as you have lately done, they will certainly ſoon fall out of conceit with you, juſt as they have grown tired of Triſtram Shandy.---Here take him amongſt you, and much good may he do you.

Apollo, I ſhould be glad to know if you have made as much of Mr. W---s at a guinea, as I am like to do of Mr. Ch---ll at half a crown.

APOLLO.

Alas no ſuch thing! I find his good friends have exhauſted all their public ſpirit,

patriotiſm, and love for their country and This their country's Champion, in bellowing and huzzaing, in drinking his health and bawling out Wilkes and Liberty. The Scotch Bodies, as you call them, are infinitely more generous; they have bid much more for their Highland Poet, than the Engliſh for their ſquinting Patriot; notwithſtanding the latter affect to deſpiſe the poverty of the former ſo much. You ſee, that now when we want to touch 'em for a guinea, they are ſilent and do nothing.

MERCURY.

I am not in the leaſt ſurpriſed at it. Such is the manner of all mobs; as wild and tempeſtuous, as fickle and changeable as the ocean itſelf: raiſed into a ſtorm and fury by the ſmalleſt guſt of wind, and as ſuddenly laid when that ſubſides. Thoſe who truſt their All to it without any precaution, are ſure to be entirely ruined by it in the end, and what is worſe they frequently enrich others, even ſtrangers, nay their enemies, by their ſhipwreck. Such in a great meaſure, has been the fate of this poor man. In ſhort, I am afraid my friend W----s, with all

all his boaſted wit and ſpirit, and patriotiſm,

Has been, like Hudibras, a Tool
That knaves do work with, call'd a Fool.

I perceive ſome perſonages here, who have been greatly obliged to this man's folly, and who have raiſed themſelves to the utmoſt height of their ambition on his ruin. Pray, my good Lords, and Honourable Gentlemen, ſhew ſome gratitude, and have ſome compaſſion on your *quondam* Friend, Aſſociate, and Fellow-Labourer. Do not, I beſeech you, follow the example of a certain Perſon, who in your Theogony is called the the Devil, that is to ſay, when you have uſed a ladder to mount to the height you deſign, as ſoon as you have got footing there, to kick it down after you. He has been imprudent, I grant you, and perhaps has gone greater lengths than you would have adviſed him; but if he had not gone thoſe lengths, he would not have raiſed that outcry, nor made the noiſe and hubbub he did, and conſequently you to whom I ſpeak, would not have been what You now are. My only reaſon for intereſting myſelf in his favour is, that he is a man of wit, of parts and ingenuity;

nuity; he may yet be uſeful, and even an ornament to his Country; he loves it I believe, and I know longs earneſtly to have the liberty of remaining in it.

What! not a word! all profoundly ſilent!

Well, friend W-----s, you ſee how the world goes. But this you might have known before, and innumerable inſtances, both in ancient and modern annals would have informed you of it. It is now too late for you to take warning yourſelf. But let others take warning from your fate; and henceforth let no Underling ever take upon him to be the mouth and oracle, and to do the dirty work of a Faction; they are always ſure to deſert him, when they have no farther uſe for him, nay frequently obtain their ends by making a ſacrifice of him. Mr. W----s, I did indeed expect to have touched a pretty ſum of money on your account; yet notwithſtanding my diſappointment, and that I am ſaid to be the God of thieves, nay, am called a thief and a pick-pocket by the poets, I ſhall not leave you in the lurch,

lurch, as your ſmall friends, the mob, and your great friends, the miniſtry, have done; I ſhall carry you back and ſet you down ſafe and ſound where I caught you.

Now gentlemen, I put up an author to auction, another gueſs ſort of man I aſſure you, one that has made a much better and more profitable uſe of his *powers* of *celebration* and *altercation*.

BOOKSELLERS.

Where is he? We muſt ſee him, and examine into his *powers*, and know his *fort* before we bid. We ſhall not buy a pig in a poke, as the ſaying is. Beſides, ſhould we purchaſe authors, before they are brought to a fair and open market, we know not but we may be deemed foreſtallers and regraters, and come under the ſtatute provided againſt the practices of ſuch people.

MERCURY.

My worthy gentlemen, the author I ſpeak of was once a very good friend of yours. He has publicly declared, when it ſuited his purpoſe, that, even in this enlightened age, you

you were neither the worſt judges nor the leaſt rewarders of literary merit.

But now he is above your reach I aſſure you; he is like ſome of thoſe tradeſmen, who by a lucky hit have been enabled to leave off ſhop-keeping, and ſet up their equipage, but ſtill retaining a love for their former profeſſion, appear frequently on Change, and drive bargains occaſionally.

Gentlemen, for ſundry and prudential reaſons I do not chuſe to *exhibit* him on the table, and put him under my hammer, or even to mention his name. But I ſhall deſcribe him to you, as well as I can; and if you ſhould not know him by his picture, it will be your own fault. He is the great Coloſſus, who beſtrides the narrow world of literature and has caſt his ſhoe over all the regions of ſcience. He is that mighty genius, againſt whom ever ſince his firſt appearance, all the dunces of the world have been in combination. He is that modeſt man, who, if you ſay any thing to the diſadvantage of his morals, I mean his charity, humility or good manners, tells you in the

the words of the good father Valerian, *mentiris impudentiſſime.* He is ſole keeper, manager, and governor of a certain famous literary goal or dungeon, which is infinitely worſe than Hudibras's or Crowdero's priſon; for that is

By ſtrange inchantment made to fetter
The leſſer parts and free the greater;

whereas here, you are in, neck and heels, ſoul, body and all. From thence, from the ſtocks I mean, you may be *freed by Head of Borough*, but here you muſt lie and rot and ſtink to all eternity. If you diſſent from him, if you are ſilent, nay even if you praiſe him, unleſs in ſuch high ſtrains of panegyric, as ſhall come up to this great man's ſelf-eſtimation, he will thruſt you into this loathſome dungeon without pity or remorſe. In ſhort, gentlemen, I muſt put him up at a very high price indeed, and you muſt bid luſtily for him, otherwiſe he will impriſon us all. Beſides, he is a moſt excellent Horſe-doctor. He has diſcovered a diſtemper incident to thoſe noble animals quite unknown to former farriers. He calls it the *Oats.* Is there any Fox-hunter, or Gentleman of

the Turf here, who has got a ſtud of horſes diſeaſed he does not know how? perhaps it may be with the *Oats*. I would adviſe him by all means to conſult this univerſal Genius. I had almoſt forgot it, but he is to the full as great a Muſician as he is a Farrier; he has found out a new property in that warlike muſical inſtrument the Fife; it is no longer *th'are-piercer*, as Shakeſpear calls it; it is *th' feur-ſperſer*. What ſhall I ſet him up at, Gentlemen? Come, who bids money for this magnanimous *th' f*——; plague on't, I have been ſo uſed to the muſty old-faſhioned Greek, which you know was my mother tongue, that I cannot mouthe this word as it ought to be. Durſt I *exhibit* its great inventor beneath my hammer, I'll warrant he would do it moſt melodiouſly. But you know whom I mean, by this time, ſure, or the D——l's in't.

OXONIAN.

Ay that I do. But ſquire Mercurius, you have not enumerated one moiety of his inherent qualifications and predicated excellencies. He is a moſt celebrious Logician, a moſt profound ſyllogiſtical and argumenti-

fying

fying Reaſoner. He demonſtrates every thing by *Barbara*, *Celarent*, and ſo forth. I have known him harangue ſo long, ſo learnedly, and ſo myſteriouſly on the premiſſes, the *Major* and *Minor* I mean, that both He and his Readers, have ſoon loſt all ſight, view, proſpect, and even Reminiſcence of the Illation or concluſion.

MERCURY.

Pray, Sir, give me leave, but methinks your Phyſiognomy is not altogether foreign and extraneous to me. I have certainly ſeen you ſomewhere before now, but whether at the Univerſity in Oxford, or at ſome of the Univerſities here in Covent Garden, ſuch as the *Shakeſpear* or *Weatherby*'s, I cannot now recollect.

OXONIAN.

Poſſibly you have ſeen me at all three Old Boy. For I am a Graduate of Chriſt-Church, Oxon; and when I divert or take an equitatory ſcheme or excurſion to this dignified Metropolis, my moſt uſual places of reſidence and occurrence are thoſe which you have enucleated. And if my reminiſcence be not totally obumbrated and falſificated, I imagine

gine you and I have averruncated a bottle and a ſyllogiſm, and divellicated a bird and a girl together before now.

MERCURY.

It may be ſo, friend; for We youthful Deities are ſometimes guilty of theſe things. But I wiſh old acquaintance, you would ſpeak plain Engliſh. For tho' I underſtand you very well, as indeed all languages are alike to me, yet I queſtion much whether moſt of our hearers will. Beſides, there are ſome miniſters of ſtate here, who may take it into their heads that we are hatching plots, or talking high treaſon, and ſo iſſue out general warrants againſt us.

AUDIENCE.

O Mr. Mercury, pray Mr. Mercury, be not under the ſmalleſt uneaſineſs. We underſtand him very well. We have learnt this language from the excellent Rambler. This gentleman ſpeaks altogether in conformity to the elegancy, perſpicuity, and perſpicacity of the great Mr. S----l J----n's ſtyle. We hope you are to exhibit Him too in your auction.

MER-

MERCURY.

All in good time, gentlemen and ladies. But let us diſpatch the buſineſs in hand in the firſt place.---Sir, *(addreſſing himſelf to the Oxoniau)* your obſervation is extremely juſt; for I have not reckoned up one half the good properties of the wonderful Genius, we are now ſelling off. To crown all, he is a moſt exquiſite hand at a paradox. I ſhould have ſaid, he poſſeſſes infinite *paradoxical powers.* In a word he is

Like Hudibras, a ſhrewd Philoſopher,
And hath read every Text and Gloſs over;
Whate'er the crabbed'ſt Author hath,
He underſtands b'implicit faith;
Whatever Sceptick can inquire for,
For every why he has a wherefore;
Knows more than forty of them do
As far as words and terms can go,
All which he underſtands by rote,
And, as occaſion ſerves, can quote.
No matter whether right or wrong,
They may be either ſaid or ſung.
He can raiſe ſcruples dark and nice,
And after ſolve 'em in a trice,
And weave fine cobwebs, fit for ſkull
That's empty when the Moon is full;
Such as take lodgings in a head
That's to be let unfurniſhed.

He

He knows the ſeat of Paradiſe,
Can tell in what degree it lies:
And, as he is diſpos'd, can prove it
Below the Moon, or elſe above it.

In ſhort, Gentlemen, to ſum up his character in one diſtich, like that renowned knight,

On either ſide He will diſpute
Confute, change hands, and ſtill confute.

Pray Sir, I ſpeak to You my old friend of Chriſt-Church, Oxon, anſwer me this plain queſtion. Is it day-light at preſent, or dark night?

OXONIAN.

Day-light beyond all poſſibility of dubeity.

MERCURY.

But by what category, or mode of ſyllogiſtical ratiocination, do you demonſtrate this propoſition?

OXONIAN.

Leave being conceded by this moſt illuſtrious and dignified aſſemblage of heroes and heroines, it is my purpoſe to effectuate the requeſted demonſtration by the following Sorites.

Whenever

Whenever, and wherever the ſolar luminary is mounted above the horizon of human proſpects, and diffuſes through the circumambient atmoſphere the reſplendency of his radiant beams, it is then and there day-light.

In that parallel of latitude wherein this ſignal metropolis is ſituated, the ſolar luminary is conſtantly and invariably mounted above the horizon of human proſpects, and diffuſes through the circumambient atmoſphere the reſplendency of his radiant beams in that portion of the diurnal circumrotation which is interjected between the poſtmeridional hours of One and Two.

But the preſent time in which I now ſpeak, is interjected between the poſtmeridional hours of One and Two.

Therefore I conclude, from theſe premiſes, that it is now day-light. *Quod erat demonſtrandum.*

MERCURY.

So, all that I am to underſtand from this ſuperfluity of words, is, that it is day-light becauſe the ſun ſhines?

OXONIAN.

OXONIAN.

Thou haſt hit it, Old Boy.

MERCURY.

But thou haſt miſs'd it, Young Man. Pooh! every ploughman could have told me as much, and in plainer terms. Beſides, you greatly miſtake this wonderful original, and you are altogether to ſeek about his manner of proceeding. Why, Sir, this exalted demonſtrator would have gone quite the contrary way to work. He would have told you, that it was day-light becauſe the ſun did not ſhine at all; and he would have wrote you four or five large volumes about it. In the firſt place, he would have proved that the ſun did not ſhine; and in the ſecond place, that it was day-light becauſe it did not. This, however, is nothing. Do you know what he has done beſides? He has proved that the old Eleuſinian Myſteries, and modern Free Maſonry, are all one and the ſame thing: and that both Apollo and myſelf were, many centuries ago, Grand Maſters of certain famous Lodges in Greece and Italy.

OXONIAN

OXONIAN.

But were you really ſo, Mr. Mercury?

MERCURY.

Faith, I can't tell. It is ſo long ago that we muſt have forgot, for neither of us remember any thing at all about the matter. But he knows theſe things much better than we do, therefore we have ſubmitted to him. Beſides, to tell you the truth, we durſt not well have done otherwiſe, for had we contradicted him, he would either have knockt us down, or perſuaded every body that we were Scepticks and Unbelievers, nay even Atheiſts, notwithſtanding we are Gods.

OXONIAN.

Pray, do you think he could demonſtrate that Five Hundred is a ſmaller number than Two Hundred, or that a Quarter of a Year is a longer ſpace of time than a whole Year?

MERCURY.

Upon my honour I cannot reſolve you that queſtion juſt at preſent. But why do you aſk it?

OXONIAN.

You muſt know, Squire Mercurius, that

I have a rich covetous old Hunks of a Father in the country, who, I verily believe, has been preſented with immortality by Calypſo, or has got a renovation of his age in Medea's kettle. The queer Putt has taken it in's head, that fifty pounds a quarter is ſufficient in all conſcience, nay too much, he ſays, for any young gentleman at the univerſity. Now I ſpend my quarter's allowance in a fortnight's time here in town, and for the remaining ten weeks am obliged to ſtudy hard, and have not money to pay my reckoning at the club. I am not very extravagant, and if this great demonſtrator ſhould exert his paradoxical Powers in ſuch a manner as to perſuade Old Square-toes of the truth of either of the above poſitions, I ſhould be ſatisfied, and make you a handſome preſent for the uſe of him.

MERCURY.

Really Sir, if he did not ſucceed in ſuch an undertaking, I know of no one that could. After what he has done, I think he need deſpair of nothing. But Sir, we do not circulate Authors; as ſome people do Books. We lend none, but ſell them all outright.

OXONIAN.

OXONIAN.

To tell you the truth, Squire Mercurius, I am ſomewhat deficient in Pecuniary ſtores at preſent. I am juſt on the wing for *Alma Mater*, and I never return thither with my pockets well lined. I have got but two quarter-guineas left; one of them ſhall carry me down, and the other, if you pleaſe ſhall go for the Paradox-monger.

MERCURY.

For ſhame, Sir. Such critical and paradoxical Powers for a quarter-guinea. *O tempora, o mores!*

OXONIAN.

Nay, I am perfectly aſhamed on't myſelf, but I can't help it. However, if you will wait till he has perſuaded my Old Man that Five hundred Pounds are leſs than Two, for he ſtill maintains that is too much, I ſhall moſt faithfully pay you half the difference.

MERCURY.

No, no, friend. A bird in hand is worth two in the buſh. Give me the money, and you ſhall have him, with all his paradoxes and paradoxical poſitions, into the bargain.

Truth is, we are glad to get rid of him at any rate.

Now, gentlemen and ladies I exhibit an Author, that ----- Waiter bring out Mr. -----

AUDIENCE.

What! the great Mr. S----l J-----n, the Excellent Rambler? Remember, Mr. Mercury, you promiſed to exhibit Him in the next place.

MERCURY.

O gentlemen, dear gentlemen, you renew all my griefs, all my woes, and all my miſeries. You bring freſh into my mind all my complicated infelicities, and comick calamities. Alas, what a misfortune have You, and I, and Apollo, and all of us met with!

AUDIENCE.

Pray, Mr. Mercury, we beſeech you let us know what is the matter. You or Apollo a'n't fallen ſick we hope.

MERCURY.

Not at all, gentlemen. Would to heaven we were, in the room of Somebody that is. Alas! oh me!. The flower of our flock! the beſt feather in our wing! The Paragon, the Corypheus of all Authors living, dead

or

or dying. One that has gone through ſuch a fatiguing ſervice of Celebrity, at laſt to ---

AUDIENCE.

How, what's this? Who is this Paragon, this Corypheus?

MERCURY.

Alas, gentlemen, can't you gueſs. Who ſhould it be but the celebrious Doctor J-----n?

AUDIENCE.

Doctor J-----n! What of him, is he dead or dying?

MERCURY.

No! no! were it no other than that, I ſhould not take on at the rate I do. For that you muſt all expect. It is the common fate of humanity; the univerſal law of nature, to which all mortals are ſubjected.

AUDIENCE.

What then, you have not been able to catch the Doctor? or has he made his eſcape from you?

MERCURY.

Nor that neither, gentlemen. We had caught him ſure enough, and ſtill have him

him ſafe enough. Would he were as ſound, poor gentleman!

AUDIENCE.

What has the Doctor been engaged in certain dangerous wars, and wounded in them? Has he been unfortunate in his amours?

MERCURY.

Alas, poor gentleman, he runs but little riſque of being wounded in the manner you mean. Beſides, were it ſo, Apollo and I could ſoon ſet him to rights again.

AUDIENCE.

Has he loſt his ſenſes? Has he gone mad?

MERCURY.

Quite the reverſe of that, gentlemen. He has only found his ſenſes, and that's the very thing I am ſo ſorry for. Would to Jupiter he were ſtill mad! for nothing ſells ſo well as a mad Author, whether he deal in verſe or proſe.

AUDIENCE.

Why, Mr. Mercury, this is all a riddle and a myſtery to us. And we begin to think you are touched yourſelf.

MERCURY.

MERCURY.

I do not wonder you ſhould think ſo: for it is in a great meaſure a myſtery to myſelf, and it makes me almoſt mad when I reflect on the dreadful loſs, the deplorable misfortune, that has happened to us all.

APOLLO.

P--x take the fellow. He is mad in good earneſt I believe. We ſhall never have done at this rate. You Mercury! you Sir! I ſhall certainly crack your fool's ſkull for you, if you do not immediately let our good cuſtomers know what has been the matter with Doctor J---n, can't you ſay ſomething or another ----- that he has been robbed and plundered and---

MERCURY.

Ay gentlemen that's it. Apollo has hit the nail on the head. Doctor J---n has indeed been robbed and plundered with a vengeance. He is now reduced to the greateſt want and beggary, he is become a meer *tabula raſa*, a ſheet of blank paper, a page of perfect Inanity. He has loſt---

AUDIENCE.

AUDIENCE.

What has he loſt his penſion? Have any of our great patriots and œconomiſts taken That from him.

MERCURY.

No, but ſome people have taken that from him which is of greater value than his penſion. He has loſt that which procured him his penſion. He has loſt all his *powers*.

AUDIENCE.

What *powers*? His corporeal or intellectual *powers*.

MERCURY.

All his *powers*. His *powers* of all ſorts ſhapes, and ſizes. His particular *powers* of dolourous declammation, his patron powers of literature, his powers of celebration in the cauſe of his patron, his powers—

AUDIENCE.

What has ſubjected the Doctor to this direful diſaſter, complicated infelicity and and comic calamity?

MERCURY.

Ah gentlemen and ladies were you to ſee what

what a compaſſionable object he now exhibits! Did you behold in what a pickle the flowers, and the marrow, and the quinteſcence of his excellent ramblers, are now lying about in the water-cloſet within.

APOLLO.

Plague rot the fellow, he is at it again. You Mercury, is this an anſwer to the queſtion aſked you?

MERCURY.

I ſhall exhibit an account of the doctor's complicated infelicities and comic calamities as well as my powers of commiſeration, pityable ſenſations and feelings of humanity will permit me.

You muſt know, gentlemen and ladies, that the Doctor, having compoſed a Rhapſody or characteriſtical eſſay, a moſt delicious morcel of eloquence, replete with the choiceſt flowers and ſprinklings of his inimitable rhetoric, and overflowing with triads and quaternions, and all that; moſt unfortunately rehearſed it to a moroſe, old-faſhioned ill-natured Critic, quite unacquainted with the novel method of writing, that has been

for ſome time ſo deſervedly celebrious, and whom the Doctor unluckily miſtook for his great admirer, and very benevolent convivial aſſociate: I ſay this Critic, with the aid and aſſiſtance of a certain wicked and malevolent Phyſician, not only over-perſuaded, but abſolutely forced the Doctor to bibulate a potion, which made him throw up a great many of his pretty quaint words and ſayings. This however might have been borne with, and perhaps he would have recovered his loſs. But they have ſince been tampering with him, and no longer ago than laſt night, as I have been informed, juſt a little before I caught him, they had exhibited a moſt violent and draſtic purgative to him, which brought on him this morning to the manifeſt periclitation of his life, a moſt terrible hypercatharſis, which Apollo himſelf, the God of phyſicians, with all his medical powers, has hardly been able to ſtop. His exiſtence is now at laſt in no danger of comminution, but then his powers are abſolutely gone and quite evaporated. In a word, he is as dry and empty as a beer-barrel after it has been

ſome time ſet a-broach to a drunken mob at a general election.

You ſee what a conſcientious auctioneer I am. Another would have exhibited the Doctor to ſale, as if he had ſtill been in the full vigour and poſſeſſion of his powers. It is your great diſappointment and my greater loſs. But I have learnt by long experience, that honeſty is the beſt policy. And I queſtion not but you will reward me for this my honeſty, by bidding more liberally for the reſt of my authors. Gentlemen, ſhall I put up to ſale in lieu of Doctor J---n, one that approximates neareſt to him in the happineſs of felicity and choiceneſs of ſelection of his words and phraſes? *(aſide to a Waiter, bring out the author of the Roſciad)* 'Tis an anonymous Author indeed, but his works have been diſſeminated by a rapid ſale thro' the channel of the Public Ledger. He has excited the attention, and broken the concatenation of ſeminal ideas, in the worthy managers of both your national theatres. I doubt not but terrification has ſeized the melodious ſinging manager, ever ſince he has liſted on the other

ſide, and has employed the floſcular elegancies of his diction, in behalf of little D--vy. I mean the author of the Roſciad or Theatrical Regiſter. He is as like Doctor J---n as one egg is like another; I take him to be be his ſon or his brother. I have him under lock and key; ſhall I ſend for him?

AUDIENCE.

If you conſult us in the exhibition of your Authors, we deſire you would exhibit the Phyſician and Critic.

MERCURY.

That I would gentlemen, were it in my power. And you ſhould have a penn'orth of them beſides. But as for the Phyſician, I had no buſineſs with him, and as for the Critic, I did not think him worth catching, unleſs I may have got him by chance among my anonymous Authors. But pray what would you do with him?

AUDIENCE.

Order our footmen to toſs him in a blanket, drag him through the kennel, and duck him in an horſe-pond.

MERCURY.

Ay, and give the ſcoundrel the due and proper

proper reward of his inſolence! What! ſuch a fellow, to attack with ſo little ceremony, your own Excellent Rambler, your renowned Lexicographer, one who has received ſuch magnificent remuneratory honours, ſuch luſciouſneſs of eulogy and ſuch encomiaſtic veneration both from his ſovereign and the public; one who without any interceding interceſſion, but with a ſpontaneity of oblation, has been dignified with a Doctorſhip in Laws, by an univerſity, which heretofore refuſed a Maſterſhip of Arts to Dean Swift, and granted it not at laſt, but with a note of diſapprobation, a term of opprobrioufneſs, and a ſtigma of diſgrace! You ſee, gentlemen, that for my part, I not only admire Doctor J---n, but even imitate him. Here's a Triad for you as good as any of his.

But do you know that this Dog of a Critic has exhibited the Doctor under the denomition of your Engliſh Lexiphanes.

AUDIENCE.

We have heard as much. We have ſeen it advertiſed in the News-papers.

MERCURY.

MERCURY.

So none of you have read the Dialogue entituled Lexiphanes, in which there is a compleat account of this deplorable tranſaction, of this felonious literary aſſault, battery, and robbery.

AUDIENCE.

For what ſhould we? Can you think we would read any thing written againſt the Excellent Rambler?

MERCURY.

Ay gentlemen, for That I commend you. Stick to that reſolution I beſeech you. Should he even publiſh an account of this Sale, do not ſo much as look into it. That will be infinitely better than either blanketing or ducking. The fellow will ſoon be tired of writing, and his bookſeller of printing. Send the Raſcal to ſea again, and there let him periſh.

And now gentlemen, I ſet up an Author to ſale, of ſuch various, ſuch complicated, and ſuch perplexed powers, that I am really deficient in powers myſelf to deſcribe or expreſs them. But this has been already done by an eminent writer, whom I do not chuſe to

quote

quote at preſent.---Is there any merchant adventurer here, any man who has more money than he knows what to do with, and diſpoſed to lay it out in a new branch of trade, which will be pointed out to him by that wonderful genius, I am now going to exhibit? He has diſcovered a rich inexhauſtible mine of turf or peat, in the well-improved, richly cultivated, and populous country of Florida: infinite commercial advantages will be drawn from it; more than cent per cent may be made of it; in ſhort, it will be more profitable than an Eaſt-Indian government, to carry cargoes of this turf to the cold, bleak, Weſt-Indian Iſlands, where the poor Planters and Negroes are ſhivering and freezing under the torrid zone.

Mr. G----.

What Mr. Mercury, do you mean my friend Mr. ----.

MERCURY.

I do indeed Mr. G-----, and ſhall exhibit him preſently. Waiter, bring out Mr. -----

Mr. G----.

His political or auditorical powers are really

really good for little. But he is very ſignal for tragical and comical powers.

MERCURY.

I know That well, Mr. G----. So, You are to be my cuſtomer. Come, bid money for him.

Mr. G----.

Not I indeed. *Quæranda pecunia prima eſt.* I never part with money, my buſineſs both as an actor and manager, is to GET MONEY. But you ſhall have a prologue or an epilogue for him, if you pleaſe. I have a great many by me of both ſorts, ready made, and fit for either Tragedy or Comedy.

MERCURY.

Keep them to yourſelf Mr. G----, I ſhall not part with an author, even ſuch an one as this, for a ſong, much leſs for one of Your prologues or epilogues. Were I to bring a play on the ſtage, I ſhould be very glad to ſee you ACT in it, but could well diſpenſe with your WRITING in it. Were John Dryden alive, I would ſooner give Him five guineas for a copy of verſes in praiſe of it, than accept of them *gratis* from You. You

are

a moſt excellent Actor I own, but *non omnia poſſumus omnes.*

Mr. G----

Will this ſatisfy you? I will act on the common terms, whatever Play or Dramatick piece he ſhall offer me.

MERCURY.

Well, that is ſaying ſomething I confeſs. Will you act even the Deſart Iſland, or the School for Guardians?

Mr. G-----,

I am pre-ingaged for the Country Girl, a Drama of the ſame nature with the School for Guardians. But, my friend, J----y B--d will act it for him,

And he can ſqueak
As well as I can Prologues write or ſpeak.

MERCURY.

But what is that to me? what ſhall Apollo or I get by it? will the Poet give us the profits of the ninth night, his own Benefit?

Mr. G-----,

He can't promiſe that, for he has already given away his own nights to Miſs Ell--t, in exchange for her -----

MERCURY.

Well then, will he promiſe each of us a night of Miſs Ell---t? Perhaps we ſhould like that better. What do you ſay, Mr. M--?

Mr. M---,

I have nothing to ſay to it! You muſt make up that matter with Miſs Ell---t herſelf.

MERCURY.

Well, you muſt have him between you, Meſſrs. G--- and B---. I muſt e'en take my chance, I find.

Mr. G---.

Ha, ha, ha. Who could have thought, Mr. Mercury, you would have made ſo blind a bargain? Why, I'll lay you the price of a hundred Pit Tickets at each of my own Benefits, when I exhibit myſelf, that this Comedy, the School for Guardians, don't run nine nights.

MERCURY.

Plague on't, in that caſe, I ſhould make a blind bargain indeed. How's this, Mr. B---, what do you ſay to the matter? Will the School for Guardians, do ye think, run nine nights or not?

Mr

Mr. B—— *ſinging:*

The Charge is prepar'd, the Lawyers all met;
The Judges all rang'd, a terrible ſhow!
I go undiſmay'd, for Death is a debt,
A debt on demand; ſo take what I owe.
Then farewel my Love, my dear Charmer adieu;
Contented I die, 'tis the better for you:
Here end all diſputes, for the reſt of our lives,
And this way at once, I pleaſe all my Wives.

MERCURY.

What the D--l's here to do! I aſk a very plain ſimple queſtion, and he ſings me a ſong in return, which beſides has no manner of relation to the buſineſs.

Mr. G——.

Why, Mr. Mercury, our friend J--nny B---- is grown ſomewhat deaf. He has, in a great meaſure, loſt his powers of hearing, and I ſuppoſe he thought you had deſired him to exhibit a ſpecimen of his ſinging and chanting powers. But you may aſk the queſtion of his two partners and brothers in law, who are ſtanding by him. I fancy they can reſolve you.

MERCURY, *to the Second Manager.*

Pray Sir excuſe me, for I have not the honour to know your name, but underſtand-

ing you are one of the Managers of Covent-Garden Theatre, I beg you would anſwer the queſtion you heard me propoſe to your partner and brother in law.

SECOND MANAGER.

Truely, Mr. Mercury, I am quite unacquainted with theſe affairs, and I do not concern myſelf at all about them. But I ſhould be extremely glad of your cuſtom at my ſhop. Though I ſay it that ſhould not ſay it, I ſhall treat you as well as any Woollen-draper in town. You are really thinly cloathed, for this bitter weather, and tho' you are a Deity, I ſuppoſe you muſt have a feeling of cold as well as we poor mortals. Beſides, if you are not provided in a Taylor, I ſhall recommend you to the perſon who ſucceeded to my late brother in law's buſineſs, who, had he been now alive, would have been our principal Manager. You muſt know, Mr. B---d, who ſung you the ſong, ſucceeded both to his wife and the Management.

MERCURY.

Sir, I thank you heartily for your kind offer, but I am already provided in a Taylor,

as

as the poor man knows, I believe, to his ſorrow. What you ſay as to my being thinly cloathed, is indeed partly true; and I would deal with you as ſoon as another. But then you muſt give me long credit, for I am out of caſh at preſent, and this Auction is not like to mend the matter, at leaſt ſo far as it has gone. However, I have got a Comedy on the anvil, ſpick and ſpan new, and if you will procure it to be acted, you ſhall be paid what I ſhall be owing you from my firſt benefit.

SECOND MANAGER.

I doubt not but a Comedy of your compoſition would be an excellent one indeed. But its being acted depends entirely on this, whether it may be advantageous to our family or not. And for that you muſt conſult with my partners.

MERCURY, *to the Third Manager.*

So Sir, I am referred to you it ſeems. You have heard the queſtions put to your two partners. I ſhould be glad of a definitive anſwer.

THIRD MANAGER, *bowing very low.*

Ich verſtehe ihm nicht Mein Herr.

MERCURY

MERCURY.

Ich verſtehe ihm nich Mein Herr! What! a *German* Manager of an *Engliſh* Theatre! Worſe and worſe! We dramatick poets are at a fine paſs here, truly. Here are three Managers to one of the only two theatres of this great empire, at which any new Tragedy or Comedy, either of them almoſt the higheſt effort of human genius, can be produced with any advantage to the publick, and being aſked a very plain ſimple queſtion relating to their office, one of them anſwers me with ſinging a ſong, the ſecond beſpeaks my cuſtom to his ſhop, and the other confeſſes he does not underſtand one word of that language, on the fate of whoſe nobleſt and moſt difficult compoſitions he is one of the three judges who determine abſolutely, and againſt whoſe deciſion there lieth no appeal.

Mr. G——.

'Tis even ſo, Mr. Mercury, and a moſt melancholy conſideration indeed. What encouragement can Genius have to exert its powers, when its ſublimeſt productions muſt be ſubjected to the delay of capriciouſneſs, the

the ſelf-ſufficience of ignorance, and the inſolence of avarice. It is ---

MERCURY.

Hold, hold, not ſo faſt neither, my dear Little Man. I ſhrewdly ſuſpect were a Poet rejected by Covent-Garden to apply to Drury-Lane, he would find he had leaped out of the frying-pan into the fire. I am afraid we have here, a Satan reproving Sin; and I would adviſe the Little Gentleman, according to a very good book, which I am told is now grown obſolete, before he attempts plucking the mote out of his neighbour's eye, to pull the beam out of his own. I have not only heard it whiſpered, but, Mr. G------, I have heard it loudly and confidently aſſerted, that in all your theatrical dealings, you are full as much under the influence of caprice, ſelf-ſufficience, and avarice, as any of your rival Managers, the Singer, the Woollen-draper, or the German Page, and that, with your good will, you would not act any Plays, but thoſe you call Stock-plays, or your own Stuff, and that as flimzy and thin-ſpun as your Prologues and Epilogues; ſo that you may ſtill have the Benefit nights to yourſelf.

Mr.

Mr. G----.

To convince you, Mr. Mercury, how much I am belied, pray let me have the refuſal of that Comedy of yours, which, you tell us, is on the anvil.

MERCURY.

No, no, my dear Little Man. That fetch won't take; and you ſhan't catch old birds with chaff. You ſhan't ſee me dance attendance at your tail for two or three years, and after all, have the pleaſure of rejecting me at laſt, as J----y B----d has done by Doctor Sh----. Beſides, were you to accept of it, I know not but you would tack a Prologue or Epilogue to it of your own compoſing; and rather than that ---- ----

Mr. G----.

Still upon my Prologues and Epilogues, Mr. Mercury. But whatever You may think of them, their being known to be mine, is, I aſſure you, a ſufficient recommendation of them. Witneſs what the St. James's Evening ſaid but the other day on my Epilogue to the Engliſh Merchant. But I ſuppoſe you never read any of them.

MER-

MERCURY.

Never one throughout, and the great Jupiter forbid I ever ſhould.

Mr. G---.

Well, have you heard any of them rehearſed?

MERCURY.

Nor that neither. But I own I ſhould be glad to hear one rehearſed by yourſelf. For I am told your theatrical powers are ſuch, that they will make the arranteſt nonſenſe in the world paſs glibly down.

Mr. G---.

I thank you, however, for this compliment to my powers.

MERCURY.

You have heard your rival Manager J---y B---d ſing us a ſong without being aſked; now I beg you would, at my requeſt, and for the entertainment of our good cuſtomers, exhibit a Prologue or Epilogue of your own. If I remember right, you wrote an Epilogue to the Tragedy of Barbaroſſa, which was equally celebrated for its nonſenſe, and your inimitable manner of ſetting that nonſenſe

off. It was all, if I miſtake not, about *Meaſter, Mon, and Cat.*

Mr. G----.

Alas, Mr. Mercury, I have forgot both the Tragedy and Epilogue. But I ſhall exhibit a Prologue I lately compoſed, and which is ſtill freſh in my mind. You will ſee I have paid off the Criticks i' faith, as well as every body elſe.

You muſt underſtand, otherwiſe you will loſe all the wit of it, this was a Prologue for New Year's day.

I come obedient; at my brethren's call,
From top to bottom, to ſalute you all;
Warmly to wiſh, before our piece you view,
A happy year—to you—you—you—and you.

You muſt know, that at every *you*, each of the four different parts of the houſe is addreſſed, namely, the Boxes, Pit, firſt Gallery and ſecond Gallery.

Mercury.

I underſtand you; 'tis very witty and clever indeed. But go on Mr. G----.

Mr. G----.

From you the Play'rs enjoy, and feel it here,
The *merry Chriſtmas* and the *happy Year.*

There

There is a good old ſaying,—pray attend it;
As you begin the year, you'll ſurely end it.
Should any one this night incline to evil,
He'll play for twelve long months the very devil!
Should any married dame exert her tongue;
She'll ſing the *Zodiac* round the ſame ſweet ſong;
And ſhould the huſband join *his* muſick too,
Why then, 'tis *Cat* and *Dog* the whole year thro'!
Ye ſons of *Law* and *Phyſic*, for your eaſe,
Be ſure, this day, you never take your Fees:
Can't you refuſe?—then the diſeaſe grows ſtrong,
You'll have two itching palms—Lord knows how long.

MERCURY.

Pray Mr. G—, do you think it *eaſier* for a ſon of *Law* or *Phyſick* to refuſe, than to accept a fee? I am perſuaded they are all of a different opinion.

Mr. G—.

You are very dull, Mr. Mercury. Don't you perceive the Antitheſis between *Eaſe* and *Diſeaſe*. If it be a *Diſeaſe* to have an *itching Palm*, it is ſurely *Eaſe* to want one.

MERCURY.

Cry you mercy. I imagined you had brought in *Eaſe* only becauſe it happens to rhyme with *Fees*, and that you had adopted Butler's opinion, tho' not his practice.

One Verſe for ſenſe, and one for Ryhme,
I think ſufficient at a time.

But proceed, my dear Little Man;

Mr. G----.

Writers of News by this ſtrange fate are bound,
They fib to-day, and fib the whole year round.
You Wits aſſembled here, both great and ſmall,
Set not this night afloat—your critic gall;
If you ſhould ſnarl, and not incline to laughter,
What ſweet companions for a twelve-month after!
You muſt be muzzled for a night, at leaſt;
Our Author has a right this day to feaſt.
He has not touch'd one Bit as yet.---Remember,
'Tis a long *Faſt*.---from now to next December.

MERCURY.

What *Bit?* *A Bit of old Hat*, Mr. G----? A long and painful abſtinence, I muſt confeſs.

Mr. G----.

Pſhaw! you are ſo troubleſome and *mal-a-propos* with your commentaries. But here I come to the very marrow and quinteſſence of my Prologue.

'Tis holiday! you are *our Patrons* now,

Now, now, mark me well; I am ſuppoſed to bow very low, and addreſs myſelf to the

Jour-

Journeymen and Prentices in the Upper Gallery, and I give the Critics a bob, faith.

If you but grin, the Critics won't *Bow, wow.*

DOGS,

Bow-wow-wow-wow. Bow-wow-wow-wow-wow-wow.

AUDIENCE.

Encore. Encore.

Mr. G----,

If you but grin, the Critics won't *Bow, wow.*

DOGS.

Bow-wow-wow-wow. Bow-wow-wow-wow-wow-wow.

MERCURY.

Pox take theſe Curs, they have ſpoiled the recital of the charmingeſt Prologue in the univerſe. You door-keeper! you raſcal! how came you to ſuffer ſo many dogs to get into the room. Quick, or I'll break your bones for you; get a whip, laſh them, drive them out, and ſhut the door. They make ſuch a confounded noiſe, one can hardly hear one's

ſelf

ſelf ſpeak.---You ſee, Gentlemen, what infinite mimical powers this inimitable Little Actor poſſeſſes. You ſee, that he no ſooner fell a barking and bow-wowing himſelf, than all the Dogs, thinking him one of their own fraternity, imitated and anſwered him in full Chorus. Had there been a Critick in the room; I queſtion not but they would have ſmelt him out, faſtened on him, and torn him to pieces.

Mr. G----, If I am not miſtaken, this Prologue, in the rehearſal of which you have been ſo unluckily interrupted, tho' ſo much to the honour of your powers, was written for Cymon the dramatical romance. But it would have ſerved any other as well; and indeed, all your other pieces are, like Bayes's, equally happy that way. Now I beg you would indulge me with a word or two further.

Mr. G---.

A whole hiſtory, if you pleaſe.

Mercury.

Pray tell me honeſtly for once, what was the meaning of thy laſt play?

Mr. G---.

How, Mr. Mercury the meaning? Do you mean the Plot? Mer-

MERCURY.

Ay, Ay, any thing.

Mr. G——.

Faith, Mr. Mercury, the *Intrigo*'s now quite out of my head, But I have a new one in my pocket, that I may ſay is a Virgin; it has never yet been blown upon. I muſt tell you one thing, 'tis all new Wit, and tho' I ſay it, a better than my laſt; and you know well enough how that took. In fine, it ſhall read and write, and act, and plot, and ſhew; ay, and Pit, Box, and Gallery it, I'gad, with any Play in *Europe*. To morrow is its laſt Rehearſal in their Habits, and all that, as it is to be acted; and if you and your Friend, Squire Apollo, will do it but the favour to ſee it in its Virgin Attire; tho' perhaps it may bluſh, I ſhall not be aſham'd to diſcover its nakedneſs unto you.——I think it is in this Pocket. [*Here Mr. G—— puts his hand in his Pocket*].

MERCURY.

Come, I ſee you are endeavouring to top Bayes * upon me, my dear Little Man, half in

* The foregoing Speech of Mr. G——'s, is word for word, one of Bayes's, in the Rehearſal.

in jeſt, half in earneſt. 'Tis all you have for it indeed, but that won't paſs with me, I aſſure you. And I muſt honeſtly tell you, that, in ſad, ſober, ſerious earneſt, you have actually *out-rehearſed the Rehearſal*. Pray now, did you never reject any plays for thoſe very faults that I find in Your Cymon?

Mr. G---.

I may have done ſuch things, but then thoſe Plays were called Tragedies, or Comedies; whereas my Cymon is called a Dramatical Romance.

Mercury.

Pooh! then it ſeems all their fault lay in the title which you know might have been eaſily altered.

Mr. G---.

You are plaguy troubleſome and inquiſitive. I perceive, Mr. Mercury, you have never been a Father notwithſtanding all the ſtories the Poets tell of you, and that you know nothing of the ſtrength and power of the Paternal Storgé. Does not the Bear reckon her Cubs of the fineſt proportion? and the Owl think that her Young have the ſweeteſt voices? Beſides, was there ever a man yet found fault with, who having a lucrative place

in

in his diſpoſal, beſtowed it on his own ſon, on the iſſue of his loins; notwithſtanding there might be other candidates, who in the opinion of the world might have more merit and deſerve it better.

MERCURY.

Murder will out gentlemen, you ſee what it is to have an Author for a Manager.---Mr. G---, I aſk you ten thouſand pardons. I really doubted whether you had any plot, or, as you call it after Bayes, *intrigo*, in your dramatical compoſitions. But I am now convinced that you have all along had one that was ſimple, regular, uniform and conſiſtent; and that this one great plot has been moſt faithfully and invariably purſued by you without the interruption of one ſingle under-plot or epiſode.

Mr. G---,

Nay, now, I begin to like you again, you will engage my affections for ever, and be as great a favourite with me as --- or --- I ſhall certainly bring your Comedy on the ſtage, if you go on pleaſing me at this rate. But do inform me what you think this great Plot is?

MERCURY.

Why, 'tis to get money, my dear Little Man. Money, money, money!

Mr. G——.

What! is avarice my only paſſion? will you allow me no pride, no vanity?

MERCURY.

Not enough to break the unity of your great deſign. Tho' you may poſſibly diſcover a little vanity in your prologues now and then; as I hardly believe you take money for them, as poor John Dryden was obliged to do.

Mr. G——.

Well, you are a ſly, dry, droll, comical, young, old fellow. You know the world, and men, and manners.

MERCURY.

The d---l's in't if I don't, having lived ſo long, and gone thro' ſo many ſcenes of life.

Mr. G——.

I could like to be better acquainted with thee. I begin to fancy thy humour hugely. You ſeem poſſeſſed of ſome dramatical pow-

ers,

ers, and, if you have really a Comedy on hand, as you tell us, I ſhould be glad to ſee it. I will not abſolutely engage myſelf, but if in the mean time, Mr. ---- ſhould not exhibit another Defart Iſland, Mr. -----, another earl of Warwick, or my own prolifick brain, another Dramatical Romance, perhaps I may bring it on the Stage in two or three years; but if I do, remember I inſiſt on writing the prologue and epilogue.

MERCURY.

Well, I don't care if I do indulge you in this. Come, you ſhall write both Prologue and Epilogue, and even print them with it. But then you muſt promiſe me before all this good Company, and give me your word and honour that you will put it in Rehearſal, and, without fail, bring it on the Stage before the end of three years.

Mr. G----.

Nay, now upon ſecond thoughts, I cannot abſolutely engage to do that. But I'll tell you what I'll promiſe to do. I ſhall certainly inform you by that time, whether I ſhall or no.

MERCURY.

So, is it come to this after all? You, Waiters, lay hold on Mr. G——: Sieze him, I say, and shut him up in the next room.

Mr. G——*ſtruggling with the Waiter.*

What do you mean by this violence, pray? I came here to be a purchaſer, not to be ſold myſelf.

MERCURY.

Ay, Sir, you would have bought one of your own favourite Play-wrights, for a worthleſs Prologue or Epilogue. 'Twas perhaps his full value. But, my friend, I ſhould have ſold you before now, had I imagined your Prologuial or Epiloguial, or even your Dramatical Powers were good for any thing. The truth is, I thought them worth nothing, and concluded they would fetch as little. I might be miſtaken as to the latter part. But as an Actor and a Manager, I confeſs you to be ineſtimable. In the former capacity, you belong to Apollo; in the latter, you are My property. For I am not only the God, Patron and Protector of all lawful mer-

chandiſe; but alſo, of all dirty and lucrative proceedings; of all mean underhand dealings in every money-getting buſineſs. So that you are mine in a double capacity Old Boy, both when you act fairly and above-board, as a Manager, and when you act under-hand, as a Managing Author. As ſuch, you are to be ſold to-morrow.

Mr. G---.

I ſhall diſpoſe of my ſhare in the Patent, take another trip to Italy, and act no more to ſpite you.

MERCURY.

I care not a farthing for that, ſo I fulfil your great plot, get money. Thoſe who purchaſe you muſt look to it. ----- Away with him, You Waiter, I ſay, and bring out, Mr. B------ff.

CITIZENS.

Sss. Ssss. Off... off... Away, away with him.

MERCURY.

O heavens! What's here to do? Misfortune upon misfortune! Why, gentlemen, don't you know, that this is the Author of your favourite pieces, *Love in a Village*, and the *Maid of the Mill*?

AUTHOR

AUTHOR *of the Roſciad.*

Ay, but he is likewiſe Author of *Love in the City*; and I hope that the Spirited Citizens, the true friends and principal ſupport of all the places of public entertainment, will reſent, with ſtrict juſtice, the indignities caſt upon them in this piece, and treat it with the contempt it deſerves. I hope all their ſentimental feelings and powers of indignation will be rouzed. Off, off, Sssssss. Sssssss.

MERCURY.

Pray Sir, who are you, that take upon you to diſtinguiſh and exert yourſelf at this rate?

CITIZENS.

Sssssss. Sssssss. Off, Off.

MERCURY.

Nay gentlemen, dear gentlemen, do but hear me.—

AUTHOR *of the Roſciad.*

Bravo, Bravo. Well done my warm friends to the Theatre, my public-ſpirited Citizens, who are ſo groſsly and publicly abuſed,

abuſed, by being ſcandalouſly ridiculed in the moſt flagrant and contemptible manner. It calls aloud for your general condemnation. I ſhall condemn it for you to the utmoſt exertion of my powers in the Roſciad *.

MERCURY.

So, it ſeems, this genius is the author of the Theatrical Regiſter, whom I ordered out to be ſold in lieu of his reſemblance and Archi-type Doctor J----n. Waiter, lay hold of that fellow, and ſhut him up again with his Terrifications, Floſcular Elegancies, and and Sentimental Feelings.--Pray gentlemen of the City, if Mr. B--ff has ventured to ridicule you for your fondneſs of marrying your daughters among the Nobility, have not the nobility been alſo ridiculed for marrying their ſons among you, in order to pay off mortgages on their eſtates contracted by debts at play, and keeping extravagant miſtreſſes. And have you not laughed at ſuch characters?

CITIZENS.

Sssss, Sssss. Off, Off.

* The two ſpeeches, put in the mouth of this Author, are almoſt word for word his own.

Did

MERCURY.

Dear Gentlemen have ſome Reaſon in your Anger, and do as you would be done by. Did you ever know the Nobility and Gentry to attempt to damn a piece, becauſe their foibles happened to be expoſed in it.

CITIZENS.

Off, Off. Away with him, away with him.

MERCURY.

Well, it ſeems the City muſt be ſacred henceforth from ridicule, eſpecially on the ſtage, and a Livery-man, or Common-Council-man, even a Grocer or Haberdaſher is no more to be produced and expoſed there than a Clergyman. But gentlemen, as you will not bear to be laught at, I hope you do not deſerve it, I hope there is not ſo much as one griping Uſurer or fraudulent Bankrupt amongſt you; not one ſly lecherous Hypocrite, who under the maſk of ſanctity, practices all manner of villainy and debauchery; not one who keeps his equipage, a ſumptuous table, and ſpends his thouſands yearly, when he knows he is all the while, many thouſands worſe than nothing. I hope, ----

CITI-

CITIZENS.

We muſt be plain with you Mr. Mercury, and deſire you to have done preaching ſuch ſtuff and nonſenſe to us, otherwiſe we ſhall hiſs you too.

MERCURY.

You ſee Mr. B——ff, there is no talking to theſe publick-ſpirited Citizens. You muſt do ſomething to regain their favour tho', but for heaven's ſake, let the ſcene of your next Opera lie to the weſtward of Temple Bar. Can't you write *Love at Court*, where you may give the Cits their revenge, and pay off the nobility and gentry; you may repreſent them as all very deep in the Citizen's books, and never paying their debts; but do not mention a word of their lying with their wives. You will then have reaſon to hope, that theſe true friends, and principal ſupports of all public entertainments, will themſelves leave their Counters, and come with their wives and their children, their prentices and journeymen, to clap you and bear you out againſt the anger of the Boxes.

Now gentlemen, I exhibit another dramatical author. Waiter, bring out Dr. Sh—.

Doctor, I am glad to see you. You have, at one time of your life, gone thro' a very *fatiguing service of celebriety:* But you was not suffered to appear on the Stage.

DOCTOR SH----.

Dear Mr. Mercury, forget that. I have seen my error; I have recanted and sung my Palinodia. I have written the history of Sumatra under Amurath III. You understand whom I mean.

MERCURY.

I can partly guess. But pray, why did you suffer your Comedy to remain so long in J--ny B---'s hands?

DOCTOR SH-----.

Why, it was partly thro' modesty, partly from delicacy, and partly from trusting to his word; for he gave me his honour, I should be present at the reading of it.

MERCURY.

And broke his word. But that is nothing to a great man. A Manager is to all intents

intents and purpoſes tantamount to a miniſter of ſtate. Yet modeſty and delicacy are what I ſhould hardly have ſuſpected you of. However, let that paſs. Pray do you know who were his privy councellors that aſſiſted him in the judgment he paſſed on your Play? For if I miſtake not, he confeſſes he knows nothing of the matter himſelf. And I am ſure, his partners the Woollen-draper and German Page, are ſtill more ignorant, if poſſible.

DOCTOR SH----.

Nay, how ſhould I tell, ſince he would not ſuffer me to hear it read, nor give me an opportunity of talking over the matter with thoſe Privy Councellors you ſpeak of. But I think, I have made them, and all the worthy family, ſmart ſeverely under the laſhes of my pen.

MERCURY.

Pooh! to hear a man of your ſenſe and knowledge of the world talk at that idle rate. Yet, ſuch is the vanity inſeparable from Authors! Do you think they either feel or heed you? No more than Horace's Miſer, the ſcorn and hiſſes of the

Athenian people. But they made one objection to your Comedy, which I think carries some weight with it; especially in this country; that is a thinness of incident. The English, you know, are very fond of ladder and trap-door work, bolting out and in, and all such trumpery. Your friend the German Page, with whom I had the honour to have some conversation in his own language *, is mighty fond of rope-dancing,

* In the manuscript, there is a curious dialogue in High Dutch, between the German Page and Mercury, who is supposed to speak all languages; but the Printer thought proper to omit it, as altogether unentertaining to an English reader. Mercury desires the Page to give him his interest for getting his Comedy acted on their Theatre. The Page replies, that knowing nothing of such matters, he leaves the entire management of every thing to his good Friend and Brother-in-law, J——nny B———d, who, he is sorry to say it, confesses he is as ignorant as himself, which he laments as a great misfortune to their family. However, he promises Mercury his interest as far as it will go, provided he complies with the conditions in the passage here referred to. Upon which Mercury falls into a passion, and makes him the following answer: "Sir, You affront me very grossly. But I forgive you, considering who you are. "What! do you think the God of Wit and Elo-

"quence,

ing, tumbling, and legerdemain tricks, exhibited upon the Stage. He recommended to me the introducing into a Comedy which I had once some thoughts of producing on the Theatre, a Funeral Procession, or a Coronation, he did not care which. What Mr. G——k's friend and advocate † calls Fancy Plays, and recommends so much, seems to be most in vogue at present. Seriously, Doctor Sh——, I think, you have been on the whole, somewhat hardly dealt with. As I once intended being a Play-writer myself, I can feel for You. I own, had I been in Mr. B——d's place I think I should have ventured on your Comedy. I am persuaded, it would have turned out an advantage and no prejudice, to the concerns of their worthy family, which is all they are concerned about.

DR.

"quence would disgrace his Dramatical performance, by introducing into it Farcical representation fit only to entertain the senseless vulgar; I would "sooner burn it." There is no doubt, a fault in alluding to a passage which no where appears in the Dialogue, and if this is not a sufficient apology, the Criticks must make the best of it.

† The Author of the Rosciad, or Theatrical Register, published in the Ledger.

DOCTOR SH----.

I am very proud, Mr. Mercury, of the good opinion you ſeem to entertain of me, and ſhould be infinitely bound to you, were you to ſpeak to Mr. G---- in its favour. He, ſurely, would not refuſe a Performance recommended to him by the God of Wit and Eloquence.

MERCURY.

Alas Doctor! you greatly over-rate my intereſt; and, I find, are not ſo well acquainted with Mr. G----- as I am. Do you think he would act a Play, tho' written by Apollo himſelf, and the Nine Muſes in company; when he can bring forth ſo many pretty Fancy Plays of his own? It would be wrong to deſire, and preſumption to expect it. A man ſhould provide for his own offſpring in the firſt place. Sir, 'tis the voice and law of nature. Beſides, Mr. G-----k, and I are a little at odds juſt now. I made ſomewhat free with his Prologues and Epilogues, and the dear Little Man, having a great opinion, I ſuppoſe, of thoſe performances, ſeemed by no means, to reliſh my Jokes. Nay, he even ruffled me a good deal. For, pretending to compliment me on my *Dramatical Powers*, as he called

called them, he expreſſed ſome deſire to ſee my Comedy. But, all the hope he gave me of bringing it on the Stage, was this; he told me, He might do it in two or three years, provided in the mean time, his Friend M----- did not exhibit another Deſart Iſland, Mr. ------, another Earl of Warwick, or his own prolifick Brain, another Dramatical Romance. And after ſtipulating all theſe conditions, he only engaged to let me know by that time, whether he would act it or no. Theſe were the very words that paſſed, as this good Company can witneſs. We Authors, eſpecially Poets, are ſomewhat touchy; *Genus irritabile Vatum*. I muſt confeſs I was greatly vexed to find myſelf and my Comedy treated in ſo ſlighting and contemptuous a manner. You ſee, had I been ſo weak as to fall into the ſnare, I ſhould have been uſed juſt as you were. I kept my temper with ſome difficulty, but ordered the Waiter to ſeize the little Man and confine him in the next room. I ſhall ſell him to-morrow, as Actor, Manager, and Managing Author. If you can purchaſe him in the two latter capacities, you can order him to act what plays you think

proper

proper. Or, as he threatens to diſpoſe of his ſhare in the patent, if you can afford to buy it, you may in that caſe bring your own plays upon the Stage as well as he does his.

Really, Doctor, I reckon the death of the Taylor, who was Mr. B--d's predeceſſor, in his wife, and if alive, would have now had his proportion in the Patent, was an infinite, nay an irreparable loſs to Dramatic Poetry. Not only Thalia and Melpomene, but all the Tragic and Comic Poets in England who could afford it, ought to have put on mourning at his Deceaſe. Would to Jupiter he were ſtill living. In that caſe I know it would not be long ere my Comedy ſhould be acted.

DOCTOR SH-----E.

As how, Dear Mercury, pray inform me how You would manage matters?

MERCURY.

Nothing ſo eaſy. I would beſpeak two or three very extravagant ſuits of Cloaths from him, and get ſo much into his Debt, that he would be obliged in ſpite of his teeth, to act my Comedy was it ever ſuch execrable ſtuff, in the hopes of paying himſelf

himſelf by the profits of my third nights. And I do not ſee why all our brother Poets might not have done the ſame.

DOCTOR SH——E.

No bad ſcheme I confeſs. But could it not be carried into execution ſtill? You know one of the Patentees is a Woollen-draper. As for the other two, the Singer and the German Page, they deal only in Songs and Bows, which commodities are of ſo little value, that let them be ever ſo laviſh of them, they will hardly think it worth while to act a play in order to get them returned.

MERCURY.

'Tis juſt as you ſay. But if you can contrive to get into the Woollen-draper's books, I have no objection. I can only wiſh you ſucceſs, I cannot promiſe it. For Woollen-drapers will not give ſuch large and long credit as Taylors. Neither are they ſo ready and apt to do it. Taylors have been remarkable for their great and ample faith in all ages. Nay, they even truſt Courtiers and Miniſters of State, which no ſet of men in the world were ever known

to do, excepting themſelves. A Taylor that won't be a truſter, is no Taylor at all; he does not deſerve that honourable name. You muſt know I ſpeak from experience, for both Apollo and myſelf are very deep in a Taylor's books at preſent, who to my great ſorrow is no Manager. To confeſs the truth, it is partly to pay him, and our long ſcores at the taverns and bagnios, and our debts of honour to our poor loving Girls, who have had nothing from us for ſome time, but good kiſſing and fair promiſes, that we have ſet on foot this auction of Authors. But alas! with as little proſpect of ſucceſs, as You have from your Comedy. Pray, Doctor, ought you not to print it, and appeal from the ignorant intereſted Managers, to the final determination of the judicious and impartial publick?

DOCTOR SH---E.

That would be juſt making bad worſe. I have hitherto loſt only my pains. Were I to take your advice, I ſhould loſe both paper and printing. No play, whatever merit it may otherwiſe poſſeſs, unleſs acted, ever ſells enough to pay the advertiſing.

MERCURY.

You don't tell me ſo! and I cannot entertain ſuch a mean opinion of your countrymen's taſte and ſpirit, as that they can ſuffer themſelves to be led ſo entirely by the noſe by theſe Managers. I ſhall try them, and ſet on foot a ſubſcription, and as you have been unfortunate, you ſhall ſhare in it.

DR. SH-----E.

You have my leave but you will find it to no purpoſe.

MERCURY.

Gentlemen and Ladies, you have heard what has paſt between Doctor S---- and me. You have alſo heard how he has been treated by the Managers. His comedy has only been rejected, on account of their family intereſt. I imagine that you have not the ſame loyalty and affection for the Family on the Stage, that I hope you all entertain for the Family on the Throne. He is a man of parts and ingenuity: a nervous and maſculine Writer. I can promiſe you ſome entertainment from his Play, which will not, I give you my word, be ſuch inſipid ſtuff as has lately been crammed down your throats. The

uſual, price I believe, of a rejected Play, when publiſhed by ſubſcription, is a crown. Apollo has opened a ſubſcription, in which the Doctor ſhall have a ſhare. He is ready to receive your Money.

AUDIENCE.

We don't queſtion that. But ſurely Mr. Mercury, you take us to be Fools, and that we throw our money at the Cocks. Why ſhould we ſubſcribe for what we ſhould not once look into?

MERCURY.

What! Gentlemen, do you buy no Plays?

AUDIENCE.

None but thoſe that are acted.

MERCURY.

Then you muſt have bought Cymon or the Dramatical Romance?

AUDIENCE.

Ay, many thouſand Copies, and, if it continues to be acted, we ſhall buy many thouſands more.

MER-

MERCURY.

Then ſurely you do not read it. For never was there ſuch flimzy, inſipid, unconnected ſtuff.

AUDIENCE.

We read it becauſe we go to ſee it acted.

MERCURY.

But why do you go to ſee it acted?

AUDIERCE.

Why---why---we go ---becauſe we go.

MERCURY.

Pſhaw, that is a mere woman's reaſon. And if you don't give me a better, I ſhall certainly make you pay down your five ſhillings a piece.

AUDIENCE.

Why then, if you muſt have it, we go to Cymon, in order to ſee the Devils and Torches, and Cupids, the Enchanters, and Enchantreſſes and Enchantments; the Magic Palaces and Groves, the fine Machinery, and fine Scenes, which our excellent Little Ma-

anager

nager has, at an enormous expence, provided for our entertainment, in this his Fancy-Play. But as for thoſe Dramatical Pieces, in which the Criticks tell us, there is Plot and Unity, Pathos and Sentiment, fine Language, moral Inſtruction, and ſo forth; we neither go to ſee nor to hear ſuch Plays; But we go to the Play-houſe in order to ſee and be ſeen ourſelves; to chat, ogle and bow; to gather and retail ſcandal; to pick up wives and miſtreſſes, huſbands and gallants; ſome go to pick pockets, and cut purſes; but moſt of us go, becauſe we have no where elſe to go to, and nothing elſe to do.

MERCURY.

Such an Audience! Such Managers! They are perfectly well ſuited; they are exact tallies and counterparts of one another, and 'tis a pity they ſhould ever be ſeparated.---You ſee Doctor Su--e, I can neither do any thing for you nor make any thing by you. I am ſorry for both, and you are now at liberty to diſpoſe of yourſelf as you think proper.

Apollo, we have had villainous bad luck in our theatrical Authors; for one we were only

only offered a Prologue or Epilogue, another was hiſſed off the Table, and for the third, I believe the beſt of them all, they would not bid us ſo much as one Farthing.

I wiſh we had ſome of the writers for the other Stage here, I mean the Ladder. I am perſuaded we ſhould have made ſomething worth while of Jonathan Wild, Blueſkin and Sarah Malcolm, as Authors of Laſt Words and Dying Speeches. But the miſchief on't is, theſe Authors are never good for any thing, till they come to be hang'd. What do you ſay? Shall we try whether any thing can be made of the writers for the third and only remaining Stage, which you know is the Pulpit? Between all which three and their reſpective Orators, Dean Swift tells us, there is a cloſe and intimate connection and alliance.

APOLLO.

As you pleaſe, you know I have left you the direction of all theſe things. You are my Manager.

MERCURY.

Waiter bring out the Reverend Mr. G----e W---d, and ſet him on the Table.

Here

Here, my dearly beloved! is Piety, and Holineſs, and Godlineſs; which laſt is ſaid to be *great gain*. Pray Heaven we may all find it to be ſo.

METHODISTS.

Though you be Hereticks, Apoſtates and Heathens, yet we truſt you will have mercy and compaſſion on our dear precious Souls which muſt all periſh without the Word, the tender Guidance and edifying Inſtruction of our Paſtor. We are a poor Flock, and ſhall ſoon be as ſtray Sheep without our Shepherd. We poſſeſs none of the good things of this world, none of the Mammon of unrighteouſneſs. We lay up our treaſures where neither moth nor ruſt corrupt, and where no thieves come to ſteal. We mind the one thing needful, and leave you men of ſin and the world and the fleſh to be concerned about many things. Yet we ſhall throw in our mites notwithſtanding and contribute our Rayment and our Houſhold Stuff. We have done it heretofore for the Orphan Hoſpital in Georgia. With how much greater willingneſs of heart ought we to do it now for the ſake of the Holy Man himſelf!

MER-

MERCURY.

Verily, my dearly beloved Brethren and Siſters, it ſhall be as you ſay. Throw in your mites therefore into the hands of the Publican who ſtands below at the receipt of Guſtom, and I truſt you ſhall be repaid ten nay an hundred fold. In the mean time to encourage you in your good works, your holy Shepherd ſhall give you a ſprinkling of the word. Mr. Wh---d you hear what I ſay.

Mr. WH-----D.

Has any of you here, my dearly beloved Brethren and Siſters, loſt a dear and indulgent Parent, a Father or a Mother who had brought you up and nurtured you with all the tender overflowings of fatherly and motherly affection? Has any faithful and conſtant wife, long ſeparated, from her newly married huſband, by his having gone a far journey, and who expecting his return, with fond and longing arms, is ſuddenly ſurpriſed with news of his violent death, murdered by robbers on the high-way, or overwhelmed in the deep waters?

Two or three FEMALE METHODISTS.

Be, -- be, -- be, boo, -- boo, -- boo.

MR. WHITEFIELD.

Has any Husband loſt his Wife and new-born Babe at once, and followed both to the ſame grave? Has any father had his only ſon, the heir of his labours, and the prop of his declining days, raviſhed from him by an unexpected call of providence? Has any fond and tender mother ſeen her firſt-born infant, whom ſhe had long nurſed and cheriſhed with the milk of her breaſt, playing on her lap, and ſmiling in her face to day, and the next expiring in the agonies of a burning fever?

Several Male and Female METHODISTS.

Bee bee bee, Bou bou bou.

MR. WH------D.

Surely, ſurely, you think you have great reaſon to lament and mourn, and grieve thereat, as I ſee you do. But I ſay you have reaſon to rejoice. They are all happy, ſinging hymns and praiſes, in company where you will never

ver come, among Angels and bleſſed Spirits. But grieve, and mourn, and lament for yourſelves. I tell you, You are all damn'd, every ſoul of you damn'd. You will be thrown into places of utter darkneſs, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnaſhing of teeth. I ſee Hell gaping and all the Devils ready to receive and torment your naſty, rotten, ſtinking damn'd ſouls!

Chorus of all the METHODISTS.

Be, be, be, Bou, bou, bou, &c.

MERCURY.

A pox confound theſe ſniveling Raſcals! They make more noiſe with their crying, than the Dogs lately did with their barking. How ſhall we get rid of them?

(A Waiter whiſpers APOLLO.)

Here, my dearly beloved Brethren and Siſters, take your Shepherd. I freely give him up to you; but for the love of heaven, carry him hence, and let him tell you of your being all damn'd, and finiſh his ſermon ſomewhere elſe. If he contiP 2 nue

nue here any longer, I ſhall certainly fall a crying myſelf. Pray what news has the Waiter brought you. [*Aſide to Apollo.*]

APOLLO.

Why, he tells me that t' is is by far the beſt adventure we have yet met with; and that the warehouſe below is as full as it can hold of all manner of goods and houſehold furniture. But ſuch trumpery! There are old clothes of all ſorts, beds, blankets, ſheets, bolſters, frying-pans, ſtew-pans, chairs, tables, cheſts, and I know not what lumber. But he ſuſpects that a great deal of it has not been honeſtly come by. For he tells me, that there are below, a great many poor fellows, journeymen Taylors, Weavers, and the like, who are making bitter complaints, that they have been robbed by their wives. Some ſay that they have not left them a pan to dreſs their their victuals in, a chair to ſit on, or even a bed to ly on. They maintain that their wives were ſeen carrying their goods in here; ſome are even afraid of being tranſported; as many of the goods were taken out of ready furniſhed lodgings. They all threaten to apply for

warrants to ſearch for them. Now I would not willingly, that any honeſt induſtrious, poor man ſhould ſuffer ſo much by the folly and ſuperſtition of his wife, and her blind attachment to a vile deſigning impoſtor.

MERCURY.

Pooh! you are ſo conſcientious. And with your good will, you would have them all returned. But there ſhall be no ſuch thing, I tell you. What better would the poor fellow, (whom I ſincerely pity at the ſame time) be of this your generoſity? Their wives would immediately give theſe goods to the Holy Man himſelf, who would be as ready to receive them as we, tho' he has much leſs need of them, and who would likewiſe diſpoſe of them in the ſame manner I intend to do. I know an honeſt Broker who will take all in a lump, without aſking any queſtions, and give me a pretty round ſum of money for them beſides. So, leave this matter to my management, I tell you once more.

Now, Gentlemen and Ladies, we *exhibit* two reverend Perſons of very ſignal, tho' different *Celebrities*. The one is a *celeſtial Meditant*,

ditant, the other a *ſermonizing Buffoon*. Waiter, bring out the two Gentlemen, I ſpeak of, you will probably find the one ejaculating, and the other laughing. O here comes the Ejaculator; and the Buffoon too.

MR. H----Y.

O! the exceeding ſinfulneſs of ſin. O! the wretched condition of the wicked! O! the the deſperate madneſs of the Ungodly! O! ye beſotted creatures! *------

MR. H----.

Ha ha ha! Be not ſurprized, Madam, and and your Reverences, that I live in a conſtant endeavour to fence againſt the infirmities of ill health, and other evils of life, by mirth; being firmly perſuaded, that every time a man ſmiles ----- but much more ſo, when he laughs, it adds ſomething to this Fragment of Life †.

MERCURY.

You muſt know, I have been always very fond of the Company of Reverend Gentlemen. I have already parted with two, and am now going to diſpoſe of two more. The laſt I ſold, becauſe I was afraid he would one time

* Hervey's Meditations, vol. 2. page 152.

† Triſtram Shandy, vol. Dedication.

time or other perſuade me I was damned, and make me try to hang myſelf, as many of his followers are doing every now and then. The firſt, for whom I got the quarter guinea, was indeed a moſt ingenious perſon, and was intimately acquainted with ſeveral circumſtances and anecdotes of the remoteſt antiquity, which, tho' I lived at the time, and ſhould have known them, I never heard of before. But then, had I ſeemed in the leaſt to heſitate about them, I was afraid, he was ſo paſſionate, and gave me ſuch looks, that he would uſe me ill, and knock me down. Thoſe I am now going to diſpoſe of, are two of the moſt harmleſs, innocent, inoffenſive Beings, in the world. The one is perpetually grinning and and laughing, the other praying and ejaculating. They are, like Democritus and Heraclitus, foils to one another. As for the Meditant, he is always talking of repentance, death and judgment; and whatever is the ſubject of his meditations, whether a winter night, or a ſtarry night, a flower garden, or tomb-ſtone, the burthen of the ſong is ever the ſame. But, being an Immortal God, as alſo,

ſo, bleſt with perpetual youth and vigour, you muſt be ſenſible that thoſe themes, are not ſuited to me, though extremely proper for the contemplation of You, poor periſhable, wretched mortals. Indeed, you ought to think of nothing elſe; therefore I recommend it to you to buy this perpetual remembrancer. I have no occaſion for him myſelf, and you ſhall have him a penny-worth.

LADY OF QUALITY.

Mr. Mercury, you muſt excuſe me, but I have really an infinitude of affairs, an Ollio of buſineſs upon my hands. I muſt call at half a dozen Auctions, pay I know not how many viſits, and all before dinner. My chairmen will be fatigu'd to death. I deſire you will reſerve the Meditant for me, as alſo - - - *(whiſpers Mercury.)* I ſhall pay you your own price for both. This Gentlewoman who lives with me as a Companion, will ſhew you the way. You may all come in a Hackney Coach: Mr. Mercury, Your ſervant.

MERCURY.

My Lady, you ſhall be obeyed to the utmoſt tittle of punctuality. Your Ladyſhip's moſt

moſt humble and obedient. —— You ſee, Gentlemen, the Meditant is diſpoſed of by private contract. Now, what ſay you to the Sermonizing Buffoon?

AUDIENCE.

Pray, Mr. Mercury, can you inform us what he grins and laughs at?

MERCURY.

At his own jeſt, I ſuppoſe; which no bobody elſe underſtands, or if they did, would laugh at. I ſhould really believe he had been got laughing, were it not for the circumſtance of winding up the Clock. I am ſure I caught him laughing. I ſhall tell you the ſtory: Walking ſome time ago on the Pont-neuf at Paris, in ſearch of W---s and Liberty; I met a croud which obſtructed my paſſage. On mingling among them, I found this very Gentleman ſtanding with his back againſt the wall, and holding his ſides ready to burſt with laughter, as you ſee he is now. This ſcene continued for near three quarters of an hour, and a great mob of meagre half-ſtarved Frenchmen, had aſſembled round him, ga-

ping and ſtaring, and crying out to one another, *C'eſt un Fou Anglois*; 'Tis a Mad Engliſhman. Gentlemen, tho' a native of Ancient Greece, yet I have long looked upon myſelf as a Denizen of Old England: My Heart and every thing elſe about me, are entirely Engliſh. You can ſcarce conceive what I felt at that inſtant. I could not endure to hear that Country, of which I would fain reckon myſelf a native, diſgraced thus in one of her moſt eminent repreſentatives. Beſides, I wiſely conſidered I might kill two Birds, as the ſaying is, with one ſtone; that while I was removing an opprobrium from my dear Countrymen, I was likewiſe getting poſſeſſion of a moſt *celebrious and ſuperb* Author. Therefore, without any ceremony, I took him up in my arms, and made off with him.

AUDIENCE.

Pray, Mr. Mercury, did you ever learn what was the occaſion of this exuberance of merriment?

MERCURY.

O yes, Gentlemen, after he came a little to himſelf, he informed me he had been laugh-

laughing at a French Beau, whom he had juſt ſeen with a bag and ſolitaire, a ruffled ſhirt and a pair of wooden ſhoes. I muſt own, I ſmiled myſelf, but he has been laughing at it ever ſince.

AUDIENCE.

Surely, he is not laughing at That juſt now, but muſt have got ſome new crotchet in his head. Don't you ſee how he flouriſhes with his cudgel? It looks as if he were going to beat us. Pray, is he miſchievous in thoſe merry fits?

MERCURY.

Not at all. Be not, I beſeech you, under the ſmalleſt apprehenſion. Allow him only to laugh at his own jeſt, and 'tis the moſt harmleſs inoffenſive poor mad Soul in the Univerſe. I know very well, why he flouriſhes his Cudgel ſo; and a moſt excellent joke it is, i'faith; he is going to print it in the Ninth Volume of *Triſtram Shandy*.

AUDIENCE.

What the plague! Can he print the flouriſh of a Cudgel!

MERCURY.

Bleſs me! Gentlemen, I thought you had been better acquainted with the manner and inimitable humour of your own *Triſtram Shandy*. Why has he not already printed *Poor Yorick's Tomb-ſtone*; with many other pretty quaint hieroglyphical whims and fancies? The wit of his volumes does not ſo much conſiſt in what is printed, as in the manner of Printing it; in his Breaks, Daſhes, and Aſteriſms; in his blank Pages and Chapters; and in miſ-quoting and miſ-reckoning both. In ſhort, take theſe away, and he is but an ordinary man, only one of Us. This Cudgel-flouriſh now going to be printed, is an emblem of liberty exemplified in the Perſon of the heroical Corporal Trim.

AUDIENCE.

But he has found out a new piece of Wit. You ſee he has put his Cudgel under his arm, and is holding the palm of his left hand parallel to the plane of the Horizon; and ſliding the fingers of the other over it,

MER-

MERCURY.

Ay, and in a way which could not be done, were there the leaſt wart or protuberance *.

AUDIENCE.

We obſerve; but there is certainly ſome mighty witty joke, concealed under it. For you ſee how he chuckles and laughs.

MERCURY.

I am really afraid to tell you. It will make the Ladies bluſh. Beſides, Apollo will take me roundly to taſk, if I uſe any freedoms. He is the very Pink and Pattern of modeſty and delicacy in public, but when in company he likes better, he is, I aſſure you, as tearing a Blade as myſelf.

AUDIENCE.

Be not afraid, Mr. Mercury. The Ladies won't bluſh, nor be offended at a *double entendre* wrapt up in decent terms. They won't bluſh, that they may not ſeem to underſtand it.

MERCURY.

Well, if you muſt have it---Mrs. Bridget in this manner aſks a very intereſting queſtion

* See Triſtram Shandy, vol. ix.

queſtion of Corporal Trim; a queſtion of the utmoſt importance and concernment to her Miſtreſs widow Wadman, in her amours with Uncle Toby. You underſtand me now; you muſt remember uncle Toby's wound in his groin, ſure.

A GENTLEMAN.

Horace's advice (if I remember right) for raiſing grief and the tender Paſſions, was as follows:

——Si vis me flere dolendum eſt
Primum ipſi tibi.

But I think a very different conduct ought to be obſerved, when we want to excite mirth and ridicule. A joke is never ſo well received, as when told with a grave and ſerious countenance; and I do not approve of thoſe, who, deſigning to be witty, are perpetually grinning and laughing. Therefore, Mr. Mercury, I do not think you ought to inſiſt on a very high price for this Author, but take what you can get for him.

MERCURY.

Sir, you talk very ſenſibly, and I ſhould be glad to be better acquainted with you. I ſhall

ſhall take your advice, and any one who has a fancy for this merry Companion is welcome to my ſhare of him for nothing.—— Waiter, let this reverend Buffoon go about his buſineſs.

GENTLEMAN.

I have now a fancy to exhibit an Author of a very ſignal merit. But before I ſet him on the Table, I chuſe to feel your pulſes with regard to him. He writes the Elements of Criticiſm. And how he divides, and diſtinguiſhes, and analizes, and ſeparates, ſubtilizes, and interjects, you cannot imagine. Indeed, I cannot well inform you myſelf, for, tho' I have often attempted to read him, I was never able to go through the taſk. He keeps my mental powers on ſuch a continual ſtretch; and weaves ſuch a thin webb of reaſoning, that the leaſt inattention breaks thro' it. I have often thought I had him in This page, but on turning the leaf, I found I had loſt him. He has really made wonderful diſcoveries, and if ſuch are the *Elements*, or the Primmer or Hornbook of Criticiſm, what muſt the ſuper-

ſtructure

ſtructure and concluſion be! I ſhall give you a ſpecimen of his powers.

"The empire of Blefuſcu is an iſland "ſituated on the North-Eaſt ſide of Lilli-"put, from whence it is parted only by a "channel of eight hundred yards wide."

Now, Gentlemen, do you perceive any ambiguity in this ſentence?

AUDIENCE.

Not we indeed.

MERCURY.

Pooh! I ſee you are all as dull and ſtupid as myſelf. But this Author has found out a very great ambiguity, and removes it by crying out, Better thus,

"-------- from whence it is parted by a "channel of eight hundred yards wide "only."

AUDIENCE.

We perceive no difference, not we. Only if any thing, the firſt ſeems to run better.

MERCURY.

Ay, but hear him again.

It

"It is the cuſtom of the Mahometans, if they ſee any printed or written paper upon the ground, to take it up, and lay it aſide carefully, as not knowing but it may contain ſome piece of their Alcoran."

Now gentlemen, what is taken up here and laid aſide.

AUDIENCE.

Nay, Mr. Mercury, you are humbugging us now, as we may ſay.

MRRCURY.

Not I indeed, I am very ſerious. And again, I aſk you, whether this honeſt Mahometan takes up the ground or the paper?

AUDIENCE.

The paper, to be ſure. Archimedes himſelf did not pretend he could move the ground or the earth, till he had got a firm footing out of it.

MERCURY.

This only confirms me in my former opinion. I find we are all ignorant dolts alike. For my part, I never could conceive a Ma-

hometan could take up the ground, far leſs miſtake it for a piece of his Alcoran.

But let us hear what this moſt excellent Author ſays.

"The arrangement here leads me to a wrong ſenſe, as if the ground were taken up, not the paper.-----Better thus."

"It is the cuſtom of the Mahometans, if they ſee upon the ground any printed or written paper, to take it up, &c."

AUDIENCE.

'Tis very true, and a moſt wonderful diſcovery we confeſs. Pray, Mr. Mercury, are all this Author's Criticiſms equally profound and ingenious?

MERCURY.

Much about one. Beſides, he lays about him at a terrible rate. Not one has eſcaped his cenſures. Homer, Virgil, Milton, Moliere, Dryden, Pope------.

AUDIENCE.

What! has he cenſured our own immortal Shakeſpeare too!

MER-

MERCURY.

No, Gentlemen, he is very favourable to your own immortal Shakeſpeare. He tells you, that in all his works there is not a ſingle barren ſcene.

AUDIENCE.

We thank him for that, and we are glad to hear it, whether it be true or no. You muſt underſtand our own excellent Rambler is ſomewhat out of our good graces at preſent, for having made too free with our own immortal Shakeſpeare.

MERCURY.

For heaven's ſake, mention that Gentleman no more; whenever I think on what we have loſt by him, I am as melancholy as an Undertaker, who, having been promiſed the burying of an Alderman, has loſt it by his unexpected recovery, after ſentence paſt on him by the Phyſicians.---- But to our Buſineſs. Waiter, bring out Dr. H----.

BOOKSELLERS.

Mr. Mercury, if you take our advice, you will not exhibit that Gentleman under your Hammer. You will get nothing for him: Even we Bookſellers who care not if the Devil himſelf wrote for us, are obliged, whenever we employ him, to ſtipulate that he ſhall not be known to be the Author of thoſe works, for which we contract to pay him.

MERCURY.

What's this you tell me of the Inſpector of Great Britain, the moſt univerſal genius of the Age he lives in; more univerſal ſtill than the ingenious Manufacturer of Florida Peat: The inventor of Balſam of Honey, Tincture of Bardana, Decoction of Valerian; and I know not how many other Medicines, all prepared by himſelf; which cure all diſtempers, even death itſelf, and which he recommends ſo ſtrenuouſly to the world, by telling them to "beware of Counterfeits, a caution for which there is more reaſon than good men are aware

ware of." What! do you think the Diſcoverer of thoſe wonderful Inſects that breathe thro' their fundament, will fetch nothing?

BOOKSELLERS.

Really, as for thoſe Inſects you talk of, we do not hear that any one has ever ſeen them, excepting himſelf; and his inventions of Balſams, Elixirs, Decoctions, and what not, come under the article of Quackery, not of Authorſhip. Perhaps you may get ſomething for him, if you can ſhuffle him in dexterouſly among your anonymous Authors; or you may diſpoſe of him by private contract to ſome great man, who is fond of Cocle-ſhell-learning, and has more money than wit.

MERCURY.

Well, let it be as you ſay. I ſhall ſell him to-morrow among the Quack Doctors.

Now, Gentlemen, I produce another Philoſopher, but a quite different ſort of man, I aſſure you; no dealer in Cockle-ſhells; nor diſcoverer of fundamental reſpiration. It

is

is the reverend Doctor Hales, one who has ſpent a long life in Philoſophical and natural enquiries and experiments; not to ſatisfy an idle and empty curioſity, nor to acquire the vain and ſpecious character of a learned and ingenious Perſon; but the end of all his labours, and the reſult of all his enquiries have been directed to the benefit and advantage of his fellow-creatures. His virtues, his affections, for paſſions he ſeems to have none, appear to be ſomething above human; they are every way God-like. Surely, Gentlemen and Ladies, ample amends will now be made us for the many ſevere diſappointments we have met with, in Dr. J---n, Mr. B---ff, Dr. St-----; and almoſt all the other Authors, whom we have hitherto attempted to diſpoſe of. I will venture to ſay, that he has been the means of preventing more diſeaſes and ſaving more lives by his ventilators alone, than Doctor H----- and his brethren have occaſioned or deſtroyed by their Quackeries. Gentlemen, I will neither affront you nor him, by preſuming to ſet a price on him. I

ſhall

ſhall leave that to your own generoſity, and to your due and proper ſenſe of his merits.-------

What! have I been talking to the walls, or the winds, or to the ſeas, deafer than either! They mind not a word that I ſay, and are tattling and goſſipping to one another.

Apollo, I find we have been ſadly miſtaken in the rates we have ſet upon our Authors; and that we ought rather to eſtimate them by the rule of contraries.

APOLLO.

It is very true, and 'tis a burning ſhame.

Dr. Hales, I moſt ſincerely aſk your pardon, for producing you in this diſgraceful manner, under a hammer and on a common Auction table; eſpecially, before ſuch a ſenſeleſs triffling Company as we happen at preſent to have about us. Go therefore, my worthy, my benevolent good old Man, Go, and the beſt of rewards attend you, the conſciouſneſs of a life well ſpent, the applauſes of all good men like yourſelf, and the favour of the immortal Gods themſelves.

I perceive, Mercury, we ſhall make nothing of our good Authors, of thoſe who have real and undoubted merit. It would be wrong therefore, to expoſe them to Sale, and to ſhew them, by the ſmall, or rather, no prices, offered for them, the little eſtimation they are held in by the majority of their wiſe and judicious countrymen. So, you'll order your attendants to diſmiſs them all, making them an apology for the needleſs trouble we have put them to. Give my compliments at the ſame time, particularly, to Dr. L-----th, Mr. H--------d, Mr. B-------ke, the two Meſſ. H-------s the Hiſtorian and Poet, to the Author of the *Elements* too, who tho' an Hypercritick, and extravagantly ſubtile, is yet a man of ſenſe and genius; as alſo to the Doctors Sm----t, Rob----n, and C-----l; tell them that while they continue to deſerve my protection they ſhall not fail to enjoy it. Diſmiſs in the ſame manner the female hiſtorian, who writes with ſuch a ſurpriſing ſtrength and Majeſty; 'tis a pity, ſhe is ſo much

attached

attached to the ſyſtem of a party*, as hardly to preſerve the appearance of impartiality; as alſo the Authors of the World, the Connoſſeur and Adventurer; the laſt is indeed ſomewhat of a *Lexiphanes*; but we muſt excuſe it, conſidering he was the immediate Succeſſor of the Rambler, whoſe manner was then all the vogue. You may inform Meſſrs. Th——n and C——n, that I ſhould have liked their Plautus and Terence better, had they been tranſlated into plain proſe, inſtead of blank verſe, or proſe on Stilts, a ſort of meaſure neither authoriſed by the practice of the Ancients, nor conſiſtent with the genius of the Engliſh Language. Let Mr. C——n, know at the ſame time, that I ſhall certainly ſell him too, the firſt opportunity, if he ſuffers any more of Mr. G——'s Epilogues to be tackt to the Plays, he may hereafter write; unleſs indeed the Little Man makes the ſame condition with him which he did with you; I mean, that he won't act a Comedy without it.

* Lucian in his Treatiſe on Hiſtory, warns his Hiſtorian ſo ſtrongly againſt the influence of party, that one would think it was calculated for the Meridian of this Iſland.

And now, Mercury, I ſhould be glad to know, whether you have any Authors in your Collection, whoſe name or ſome particular circumſtance about them, may fall in with any particular whim or fancy of this people: or rather any Authors who inſtead of being praiſed and rewarded for their works, deſerve to be hanged for them. I mean ſuch Authors as inflame the paſſions of mankind, and ſtimulate them to vice, lewdneſs and debauchery; or inſtruct them in Arts and practices not only pernicious and deſtructive to themſelves, but to ſociety in general. If you have a large and judicious aſſortment of ſuch Authors, and if we may judge from the temper and diſpoſition of our Cuſtomers, I am convinced we ſhall make our fortunes by them.

MERCURY.

O yes, I have got a parcel of Authors, mere traſh, and rubbiſh I confeſs, but then they are marked number Forty Five. I have alſo got Harris the Pimp, who you know has done us both many a good turn, and writes the Man of Pleaſure's Kalendar; his coun-

counterpart and aſſociate Mr. C——d, who writes the Woman of Pleaſure; Mr. Hoyle the Profeſſor of Whiſt, and Heber the Horſe-genealogiſt.

APOLLO.

Ay! theſe will do. Bring them out by all means.

MERCURY.

But that worthy and pious Lady who you know bought the celeſtial Meditant, has beſpoke the Author of the Woman of Pleaſure. A ſtrange (tho' not uncommon) mixture of Devotion and lewdneſs, you'll ſay. But it is to be kept a profound ſecret, and I am to carry them both home to her houſe after the Sale is over, under the guidance of a Gentlewoman, her Friend and Companion whom ſhe has left here for that purpoſe. She is to give me my own price, and I'll warrant you, I ſhall aſk enough.

APOLLO.

'Tis very well, but a little unlucky tho' with reſpect to Harris. The want of the Woman of Pleaſure, I mean the Author, will render the Pimp much leſs neceſſary to our cuſtomers, and conſequently leſs va-

luable to us. For after the one has raiſed and inflamed their paſſions, they will be obliged to conſult the other how to gratify and allay them in the beſt and ſafeſt manner. What excuſe ſhall we make ſhould our cuſtomers call for C---d?

MERCURY.

Leave that to me; I ſhall be able to invent ſome lie or other to ſatisfy them. But let us proceed to buſineſs in the mean time.

Now, Gentlemen, *(to the Audience)*, we exhibit, not one Author ſingly, nor a brace of them, as heretofore, but a whole group or *poſſe* of them, and thoſe conſiſting of a number, the moſt lucky, nay, indeed almoſt divine. They are likewiſe marked with it. This is Number Forty Five, far more excellent than the Four of the Pythagoreans, which was alſo Ten, a perfect Triangle, and the great Divinity by which they ſwore*. They

* Conſult Lucian's Sale of Philoſophers, in the Article of Pythagorus.

They are all Stateſmen and Politicians; they can make peace or war, bring in Miniſters or turn them out, even as they ſee proper.

SCOTCHMAN.

Troth Mas Mercury you are an unco ill-tongued, ill-natured Chiel; and I did na think you wad hae uſed Your friends, the Scotch fôk, in ſic a manner.

MERCURY (*aſide to the* SCOTCHMAN.)

Wow Saunders, what's the matter wi' ye Laud.

SCOTCHMAN.

Ay, you ken fu' weel that Forty Five was the year o' the laſt Rebellion, and that we ſend up Forty Five Members. Some fôk may think you are ſelling Them.

MERCURY.

Troth, Maun, I wiſh I cou'd; but ſome fôk ſay they are aw ſold already. Beſides they're nae Authors; for maiſt part o' them can ſay nae mair than Ay or Na. But I mean

mean Number Forty Five of the North Britain, that aw the Engliſh Chiels are ſae mad about. Theſe Authors are not worth a Bawbee, but I may get a hantell o' ſiller for them. So hâd your tongue, Laud, and ſay nae mair about it. I'll treat you wi' a a bellyfu' of gude Hilland Whiſky.*

Gentlemen, you'll excuſe me, I had ſome little buſineſs with my Friend here. I am perſuaded it would be altogether needleſs and ſuperfluous for me to harrangue or expatiate any further on the *prime radical* virtues and excellencies of the *myſtical* number *Forty Five*, a matter wherewith you are all much better acquainted than I can pretend to be. I ſhall only ſay, I have ſo great a regard for this Number myſelf, that I am reſolved to be paid for my Authors in it; but whether in pieces of gold or bank-bills, I leave to yourſelves. I confeſs, that for my own particular, I ſhould prefer the latter.

PATRIOTS.

* Whiſky, a ſtrong ſpirit diſtill'd from malt, is drank in the Northern parts of Scotland, in the ſame manner as Porter is here in London. This appears from the account of a late Murder given in the News-papers.

PATRIOTS.

We don't doubt it; but believe you muſt content yourſelf with being paid in gold.

MERCURY.

Well then, let it be in Doubloons or double Joes.

PATRIOTS.

What! buy the Engliſh Number *Forty-five* with foreign Coin. 'Twould be a Soleciſm in Politicks, nay a ſpecies of high Treaſon. If you will take payment in Guineas, here they are.

MERCURY.

Well, ſince it muſt be ſo.——But you are really unconſcionable! you have got a monſtrous penn'orth.

Gentlemen, I am none of your vulgar Hackney Auctioneers, who are every day puffing and adverti ſing in the News-papers. They expoſe to ſale the prime of their wares in the beginning, whereas I have reſerved the very beſt of mine, the moſt delicate titbits for the laſt. I have now only two or three Authors to diſpoſe of, but then they are

Authors

Authors of the moſt general and univerſal uſe. The firſt of the few remaining whom I exhibit, is Mr. Harris, the Pimp general of Great Britain, Author of the Annual Liſt of Covent Garden Ladies, or the Man of Pleaſure's Kalendar; containing an exact deſcription of the moſt celebrated Ladies of Pleaſure, who frequent Covent-Garden and other parts of this Metropolis.

Surely, Gentlemen, if it be any recommendation to a work that its Author is thoroughly Maſter of the ſubject he writes on, and that he has made it the whole ſtudy and buſineſs of his life, no Author whatever can in this Article vye with Mr. Harris. I know from experience the juſtneſs of his Characters and the truth and exactneſs of his Deſcriptions. He is perfectly well acquainted with the ground he walks on, and I can vouch for almoſt every tittle in his learned and elaborate performance. Come Gentlemen what ſhall we put him up at? I ſee you will be all bidders.

NOBLE-

NOBLEMAN'S STEWARD.

Mr. Mercury, my Lord ——— preſents his compliments to you, and would have waited on you in perſon, but he is very ill of a ſevere fit of the Gout. His knees and ancles are ſo ſwelled that he cannot ſet foot to the ground; however, he has deſired me to inform you, that he ſhould be glad to have the refuſal of Mr. Harris, and that you and he ſhan't differ about the price.

BUCKS *and* BLOODS, *in a great Uproar.*

Nay, nay, no private Contracts, no underhand dealings! Mr. Mercury, we inſiſt on the Conditions of the Sale, and that our Friend Harris be put up to a fair Auction. He is an Author of the moſt publick uſe, and ought to go among the Publick. No foreſtalling the Market. If this Gentleman out-bid us, well and good, we can't help it.

MERCURY.

You ſee how it is Friend, but I ſhall talk to you preſently.——Gentlemen, I can indeed diſpoſe of this excellent Au-

thor by private Contract, and to great advantage. But being, as you ſay, of publick and univerſal benefit, I have declined the offer. I think he ought to be ſhared among you all; and I ſhall take leſs for him from You by five per Cent. than I would from a certain old gouty Lord. In this reſolution, I ſhew a truly patriotick and diſintereſted Spirit. I act entirely for the good of the Community.

BUCKS *and* BLOODS.

We ſhould be glad, Mr. Mercury, you would exhibit at the ſame time the Author of the Woman of Pleaſure; it would be for your own intereſt. They certainly ought not to be ſeparated, and would ſell beſt together.

MERCURY.

What! you young fellows of ſize and vigour, to want provocatives. The old gouty Lord wrapt up in flannels, who can't ſet a foot to the ground, requires no ſuch thing. I am perfectly aſhamed of you. If you muſt have reſtoratives and the like, conſult the moſt univerſal genius of this age, the Cockle-

ſhell

ſhell Philoſopher, the great diſcoverer of Fundamental Reſpiration. You will find an admirable receipt for that purpoſe, in his Treatiſe on the Materia Medica: at leaſt, if you take his own word for it.

BUCKS *and* BLOODS.

Nay, Mr. Mercury, it is not that neither. Mr. C----d has a moſt luſcious pen, he poſſeſſes infinite *Powers*, he deſcribes the thing ſo feelingly: in ſhort, we muſt have him and will give you any money for him. Surely ſuch an Author could not eſcape you.

MERCURY.

Ay, but he has tho'; and ſurely, I am the moſt unfortunate Auctioneer in the world. Here are two of my moſt valuable Authors, by whom I ſhould have made a fortune, entirely loſt, at leaſt for the preſent: I mean Dr. J---n and Mr. Cl----d; you all know the misfortunes of the one, and I ſhall now tell you how I came to loſe the other. It was all my own fault, and I have already ſuffered for it. I had got intelligence of this excellent and moſt inſtructive Author, that

he was at a certain Bawdy-houſe, not many hundred yards from hence, I went thither, and found him engaged with half a dozen Girls; fine jolly, buxom, Wenches. I told him my errand and intention, he ſeemed quite reſigned and ſubmiſſive, and invited me to drink a glaſs of wine. I complied, and we puſhed the bottle about. At laſt I began to grow frolickſom, he watched his opportunity, and while I was kiſſing and toying with one of the Girls, a moſt delicious young Huſſy ſhe is, he ſlily ſliped away and left the whole reckoning on my ſhoulders. Here, Gentlemen, commenced my *complicated Infelicities* and *comic Calamities*. I was exactly in the ſame predicament with Quiſquilius at Chelſea: I was totally devoid of pecuniary ſtores; but I had not ſuch an unfeeling Governor of a Caravanſeray to deal with, and I had ſomething better to depoſite than the ſting of a Waſp*. In ſhort, I pay'd the Bill with my Perſon; I made love to the old Bawd herſelf, and did what no mortal has powers to do. I was ſucceſsful, the Beldam diſmiſſed me with a thouſand

* See LEXIPHANES. page 55.

ſand bleſſings, and told me I ſhould be welcome to the run of her houſe at any time; but I would ſooner pay twenty ſuch reckonings, than go thro' the ſame drudgery over again.

My dear Gentlemen, do not deſpond; your favourite Author is not altogether loſt; my emiſſaries are at this moment hunting for him all over London; they will certainly catch him ſoon at one of his uſual haunts, a Bawdy-houſe or a Bagnio. I look for him every hour.

But do not let us forget our friend Harris in the mean time: make ſure of one at leaſt. You ſhall have him for a thouſand pieces: I won't part with him a farthing under: he is well worth it. Who deſcribes the different Powers, Properties and Qualities, of all his different Ladies, better and more emphatically than he! Beſides, he ſpeaks from experience or from the beſt information; whereas the other, I fancy, deals more in Theory and Speculation.

BUCKS *and* BLOODS.

There is certainly ſomething more in this affair than we wot of; and we are afraid this fine

fine account you have been giving us is all a Cock and a Bull ſtory. When we enquired for our moſt curious and delicious Author, we obſerved you ſmile and wink to Apollo and the Waiter. If your won't part with him, why don't you tell us ſo at once.—Since we muſt be contented with Harris, we ſhall collect the ſum you aſk for him among ourſelves, which we hope will be ſufficient.

MERCURY.

Undoubtedly, my dear worthy Gentlemen; and as ſoon as you have done it, pay it into Apollo's hands. Sir, [*to the Nobleman's Steward,*] give my compliments to your worthy Lord, and tell him, it is not in my power to oblige him, tho' were he to follow my advice, I would ſooner recommend laying the Pigeons to his Feet, than a young Girl to his Back.

My Lords and Gentlemen, and all You honourable Jockeys and Gameſters, I exhibit now my laſt couple of Authors, the learned Mr. Heber ſo ſkilful in the Pedigree of Horſes, and the profound Mr. Hoyle profeſſor of Whiſt. They are juſtly coupled together;

together; and tho' the ſubjects they write on ſeem to be very different; yet the end of their learned labours is the ſame, to teach their Students how to Bett their Money and attain to perfection in that moſt neceſſary and excellent ſcience of Gaming. I wiſh Caſtor and Pollux were here; for I confeſs I know nothing of Horſes; therefore, whoever purchaſes Mr. Hoyle ſhall have Heber into the bargain. But I could wiſh that you *Knowing Ones* would ſtudy him more accurately for the future, that you may not be taken in again ſo groſly, as you lately were, when you backt Turff, and even laid odds on his Head againſt Bay Malton.----- Profeſſor Hoyle ſhall now *exhibit a Specimen of his Powers.* He ſhall *exhibit* Caſes, intermixt with Calculations and Demonſtrations. Moſt learned and illuſtrious Profeſſor, you hear what I ſay.

HOYLE.

Suppoſe A and B partners, and that A has a Quart-major in Clubs, they being Trumps, another Quart-major in Hearts, another Quart-major in Diamonds and the

Ace

Ace of Spades: and let us ſuppoſe the Adverſaries C and D, to have the following Cards, viz. C has four Trumps, eight Hearts, and one Spade; D has five Trumps and eight Diamonds; C being to lead, plays an Heart, D Trumps it; D plays a Diamond, C Trumps it, and thus purſuing the Saw, each Partner trumps a Quart-major, of A's; and C being to play at the ninth Trick, plays a Spade, which D trumps; thus C and D have won the nine firſt Tricks, and leave A with his Quart-major in Trumps only.

MERCURY.

A moſt wonderful Caſe, a moſt heroical Atchievement indeed! Alas poor A! But my dear Profeſſor, What is a Saw, pray?

FIRST GAMESTER.

You are a very pretty fellow, Mr. Mercury, to have taken upon you to recommend any Perſon to us as an adept in a Science of which you yourſelf are ſo ignorant. Not know what a Saw is!

MER-

MERCURY.

Pray take me along with you my dear Lord. I do not make playing at Whist my profession, as your Lordship does. But maintain that I act very fairly and consistently, when I recommend to you, noble and honourable Gamesters, the careful and diligent study of that very abstruse science, which you make the business of your lives; and for that purpose would introduce you to the best and most approved Master in it. Certainly, nothing can be so laudable, as for people to endeavour at being perfect in their profession.

SECOND GAMESTER.

So you have never studied Mr Hoyle's Treatise on Whist, Mr. Mercury.

MERCURY.

Not I faith. I would sooner study Sir Isaac Newton's Principles, or the Doctrine of Infinites: I reckon either a less difficult acquirement. I have not a head-piece for it, my Lord.

THIRD GAMESTER.

I can't imagine how you Deities paſs your time in Olympus. How can you endure eternal exiſtence without Cards and Dice?

MERCURY.

Really, Sir Thomas, Jupiter will ſuffer no ſuch things among us. If he did, he does not know but we might quarrel, and then the whole Univerſe would go to wreck; or we might become as fond of them as you are, and neglect our buſineſs, which would be attended with conſequences equally bad; for inſtance, the fruits of the Earth would be deſtroyed by inundations in this place, while another would be parched up by drought and exceſſive heats; here channels of the Sea would be left dry, and there the Ocean would burſt burſt its barriers, and overflow whole iſlands and continents. Even were I, who am but a drudge among the Deities, to be admitted a member of your honourable Club, and to ſpend my nights with you at Whiſt and Hazard; the whole World would ſoon be over-run with departed Spirits: You yourſelves would not be

able to ſhuffle the Cards, or rattle the Dice-box in quiet, but you would be continually diſturbed with more alarming Apparitions, than the Cock-lane Ghoſt. My Lords and honourable Gentlemen, I have heard ſome people ſay, that inſtead of Horſe-racing at New-Market, and playing Whiſt at Almack's, you would be much better, and more profitably employed in laying ſchemes for paying off the National Debt, reducing the Taxes, lowering the price of Proviſions, and thereby eaſing the labouring Poor, from whoſe induſtry you derive all your luxuries and extravagance; and which even enables you to diſcharge your debts of Honour contracted at Play. But I know nothing of theſe matters myſelf; and I have heard others affirm, that thoſe people who ſay ſo, are ruſty old-faſhioned fools, or elſe Jacobites, and enemies to the Proteſtant Succeſſion; I believe they are in the right; nay, I am ſure on't.

FIRST GAMESTER.

But have you no diverſions, do you play at no Games at all in Olympus?

MERCURY.

O yes, beſides drinking, ſinging and dancing, we ſometimes play at Queſtions and Commands, Hot-cockles, Hunt the Slipper, Blind-man's Buff, and ſuch like innocent domeſtick amuſements. But for my part, being a mere drudge as I told you, I can ſeldom join in ſuch Parties. Were your Lordſhips as well employed, you would think as little of Cards as I do. I am afraid you have both more time and money on your hands, than you know how to diſpoſe of.

FOURTH GAMESTER.

Have you really no other Games than theſe among you? You Deities I ſee are little better than Children. You muſt be very dull and inſipid Company to one another at times.

MERCURY.

Ay, there is a certain old and very common Game in uſe among us, which all the World plays at. We have enough of that: But no Whiſt, no Piquet, no Hazard.----

FOURTH

FOURTH GAMESTER.

I am ſorry to hear it; for I had ſome thoughts of chuſing Mr. Hoyle for my Partner, and challenging you and Apollo to a ſerious Rubber. And if you had wanted Money to lay down your Stake, I ſhould have lent you both what you pleaſed *.

MERCURY.

I heartily thank your Lordſhip for the kind offer. But alas! Apollo knows ſtill leſs of the matter than I do. However, I care not if I accept your Lordſhips challenge on one Condition: But I will not be a Borrower; I ſhall ſtake the Profeſſor himſelf againſt ten thouſand Pounds of your Lordſhip's Money, the very loweſt farthing I value him at. If you win, the Profeſſor is yours for nothing; if I win, he continues mine, and I have the ten thouſand beſide. There cannot be a fairer Bett than this,

* This is no fiction, however extravagant it may ſeem. There have been Inſtances of Dupes, who have lent Money to others, and thoſe, it is likely as great Sharpers as Mercury himſelf, in order to enable them to play againſt themſelves.

this, for the Profeſſor will ſurely exert all his *Powers*, all his ſkill in Calculations, and all his artifical Memory, in order to get rid of me, who rate him at no more than what I can get by him, and to be under the protection of ſuch a munificent patron of his divine Science as your Lordſhip, and one who, by the great ſums of Money you perpetually loſe, are ſuch a generous rewarder and encourager of its honourable Profeſſors.

FOURTH GAMESTER.

'Tis done: but what is the Condition you ſpoke of, Mr Mercury?

MERCURY.

Only that when it comes to Apollo's turn, I may be allowed to ſhuffle and deal for him.

FOURTH GAMESTER.

I have no objections; for what odds would that make?

MERCURY.

A very great one; for every time I dealt I ſhould take care to have all the four Ho-

nours

nours, and ſix odd Tricks in my own hand; ſo I ſhould win the Rubber and Stake at two Deals.

FOURTH GAMESTER.

What! then you would pack the Cards, Mr Mercury?

MERCURY.

To be ſure, for I think it but reaſonable I ſhould ſupply my deficiency in ſkill and knowledge, eſpecially when playing againſt the Profeſſor of the art, by dexterity and ſlight of hand. And perhaps this would not be the very worſt match your Lordſhip ever made. With me you would only be playing againſt ſuperior dexterity, but your Lordſhip, if I miſtake not, has often played againſt that and ſuperior ſkill too.

FOURTH GAMESTER.

It may be ſo. But do you know, that were you to be caught at ſuch tricks, you would be turned out of the honouarble Club, and kickt out of the Company with diſgrace.

MER-

MERCURY.

Say you ſo my Lord! There would be two words to that Bargain tho'; perhaps you are ignorant, that beſides Orator and Auctioneer, I am alſo Wreſtler and Bruiſer, by Profeſſion; and much more expert in either of them, than your Lordſhip is in that of Gameſter: Churchill, even Broughton himſelf would be nothing in my hands.

But this is mere trifling, only talking for talking's ſake. Beſides, it grows late, and the Bookſellers, Book-makers, and Book-lenders who are our Gueſts to day, ſeem to be very ſharp ſet. *(To the Bookſellers.)* My dear Gentlemen, be not impatient; you are to dine with Apollo and me to-day. We have provided a ſmall entertainment at the Shakeſpeare; to which we beg the favour of your Company. You know we have ſtill all the anonymous Authors, who are your Market, to diſpoſe of. If you chooſe a whet before dinner, you had better go there juſt now. We ſhall be with you immediately, as ſoon as we have got a Chap for thoſe two great Authors, Heber and Hoyle.

[*Exeunt Bookſellers.*]

Now, my Lords and Gentlemen, to be ſerious, what do you give for the great Profeſſor of this moſt divine and myſterious Science, of which you are all ſuch aſſiduous Students?

FIRST GAMESTER.

A thouſand Pieces for him.

THIRD GAMESTER.

Two thouſand for him.

MERCURY.

O fy, my Lord,——fy Sir Thomas. I wont hear you; ſooner than let him go for that, I will carry him down to Tartarus, and diſpoſe of him among the Gamblers in the infernal Regions. You know not his value it ſeems. Beſides Whiſt, he teaches Piquet, Quadrille, and Back-gammon! He pretends to Cheſs too, but he is a mere blunderer at that; however, that is no loſs to him with you; for being ſomewhat a rational amuſement, where there is no room for chance or dexterity, but only thought

and judgment required; I am ſure you ſet no ſtore by it. Beſides, which is worſe, you cannot poſſibly ruin your Eſtates and families at it; for no body plays at Cheſs for any thing but relaxation.

SECOND GAMESTER.

Well, four thouſand Pounds for him.

FOURTH GAMESTER.

I ſay five Thouſand.

MERCURY.

This is very pleaſant, faith. You know, my Lords, that we are ſomewhat poor at preſent, and take advantage of our Neceſſities. In my conſcience, I believe each of 'em well worth a Million, and that were they in the hands of an Adminiſtration, who knew to make a proper uſe of them; the ſupply to his Majeſty might be raiſed by their means.——Why, there is not one of you now, but what has often play'd at Whiſt at a thouſand Pound a Corner, over and above By-betts. And

is

is there one of you who has not loſt a Rubber at times, which on playing over again, he finds (tho' too late) he might have won, had he ſtrictly obſerved all the great Maſter's directions about *forcing*, *fineſſing*, *ſhort can'ye* and the *lurch*, and playing *Sequences*, the *See-Saw*, the *Reverſe*, and the *Tenace*? One Rubber only may amount to five thouſand Pounds, which is the odds of ten thouſand in your Pockets. And yet you have the face, the conſcience to bid me only Five. O ſhame! ſhame!

FOURTH GAMESTER.

Mr. Mercury, you are not only very expert at Calculations, but ſeem to be an adept at the Game, notwithſtanding all your pretended ignorance.

MERCURY.

I know the technical terms by rote. That's all, my Lord.——Come, Mr. Profeſſor, *exhibit* one of your caſes to your worthy pupils, with a Query to it. I'll warrant you, That will make them entertain a juſter notion of your Merits.

HOYLE.

Suppoſe A and B, Partners againſt C and D; and let us ſuppoſe B has the two laſt Trumps, alſo the Queen, Knave and Nine of another Suit; and let us ſuppoſe A has neither the Ace, King, nor Ten of that Suit, and A is to lead that Suit; *query*, What Card is B to play to give him the faireſt probability of winning a Trick in that Suit?

MERCURY.

Well, my Lords and Gentlemen, what do you ſay to this? What anſwer do you make?

GAMESTERS.

Really, Mr Mercury, we can't recollect juſt at preſent. But we ſhould be obliged to Mr. Profeſſor, if he would inform us.

MERCURY.

Ay, you ſee how it is. *(to Hoyle.)* I thought my Lords, we ſhould have you at laſt. But he ſhan't open his lips, nor explain one Article of the Matter till you have bought him, and made him all your own. Come, who bids more Money? Five thouſand Pound is only bid for Profeſſor Hoyle.

SECOND

SECOND GAMESTER.

Six Thouſand for him.

THIRD GAMESTER.

Seven Thouſand.

FOURTH GAMESTER.

I ſay eight Thouſand.

MERCURY.

Well done my Lord; you come near the Mark: and I find we ſhall make a Bargain at laſt. The Profeſſor has got *A Critical Caſe, to win an Odd Trick.* No man knows from experience the importance of an Odd Trick better than your Lordſhip. Shall I make him recite it?

FOURTH GAMESTER.

There is no occaſion, I remember the the caſe very well, and a moſt curious and critical one it is.

MERCURY.

But your Lordſhip muſt remember too, that the very laſt Rubber you played, on which you had ten thouſand Pound depending, you loſt it by the odd Trick; and that you

you loſt that odd Trick by happening to throw away the Two of Clubs inſtead of the the Three of Diamonds to your Partner's ſtrong Suit. I was exceedingly vexed when I ſaw your Lordſhip commit that blunder, which I am confident you would not have done, had Hoyle been then yours, and you that diligent and attentive Pupil I would adviſe you to be. Come my Lord, He is yours for the ten thouſand Pounds. You muſt be ſenſible, had you had him before, you muſt have been at preſent, not only Profeſſor himſelf, but ten thouſand Pounds more in Pocket.

FOURTH GAMESTER.

Well, I muſt come to your Terms I think. But Mr. Mercury, you remember the Conditions of Sale propoſed by Apollo, that when a Nobleman or great Man bought an Author, his word of Honour was to be taken. Now I hereby give you my word of Honour, for the payment of ten thouſand Pounds, the ſum agreed on for Hoyle and Heber.

MER-

MERCURY.

My dear Lord, I muſt beg to be excuſed. When Apollo mentioned that condition, he only meant it for thoſe great Men, who patronize and encourage Authors of learning and Genius, merely for the regard they entertain for them, and the diſintereſted pleaſure they take in their writings. But this day's Sale has ſhewn what ſort of Patrons the Nobility and Gentry of this Country are. You know we were obliged to diſmiſs all our beſt Authors, without even ſetting them up, becauſe we plainly ſaw we ſhould get nothing for them. There are indeed but few Patrons of Letters at any rate; but none at all among You Horſe-racers and Gamblers: You have much more intereſting concerns to mind: You have no leiſure for ſuch inſignificant purſuits. Beſides, here is another eſſential difference. Your Lordſhip, excuſe me, has in this affair acted like a mere Bookſeller, who buys a *Reviewer* or a *Dictionary-writer*, with a view to make money by the ſale of his Writings. In the ſame manner you have purchaſed

chaſed Hoyle and Heber profeſſedly, with a view to avail yourſelf of the ſkill of the one in Horſes, and of the other at Whiſt; ſo that you might lay your Betts more judiciouſly, and manage your Cards better for the future; and thus recover your ſevere loſſes at New Market and Almack's.

FOURTH GAMESTER.

So Mr. Mercury; ſince you account me as a mere Bookſeller, you cannot refuſe me the ſame indulgence, that is, a twelve-month's credit. You give that to Him, provided he purchaſe a hundred Pouds worth of goods. You know I have bought to the amount of ten Thouſand.

MERCURY.

Alas! it gives me infinite concern, that I cannot even comply with that. Do but conſider, my good Lord, that your Trade is vaſtly more tickliſh and precarious than a Bookſeller's. Your property is more fluctuating and uncertain than Eaſt India ſtock.

And

And notwithſtanding, all Mr. Heber's ſkill in Pedigrees, and ſo forth; you may again be drawn in to back another Turf againſt a Bay Malton: And with all Mr. Hoyle's knowledge of Game, were you to engage at Play with ſuch a fellow as myſelf, who can pack the Cards, and cog the Dice before your eyes, and you know nothing of the matter; he would cheat your Lordſhip out of your whole Eſtate, were you to ſtake high enough, in one night's time. Therefore my Lord, common prudence requires me to tell you plainly, No Money, no Hoyle, no Heber.

FOURTH GAMESTER.

Mr. Mercury, I did not imagine you had been ſo ſecure a Dealer. But ſince I have made the Bargain, I muſt ſtand to it, I think. Here is a Draught on my Steward for the Money.

MERCURY.

My Lord, I am much obliged to you, and the moment the Money is paid, the Champions ſhall be delivered. I heartily wiſh your Lordſhip all poſſible ſucceſs in your future Matches and Parties. May you never lay Six to Four on another Turf:

may you never play another Two of Clubs for a Three of Diamonds; and may you at laſt become a *knowing One indeed!* But after all, for there is no abſolute certainty in theſe matters; if your Lordſhip ſhould prove unſucceſsful, I ſhall furniſh you gratis, with a Medicine which is as certain and expeditious as a Bullet, but greatly preferable to it in this reſpect, that it leaves no marks or traces of its operations behind it; ſo that the world muſt ever remain in the dark as to the cauſe of your exit. My other dear Lords, and honourable Gentlemen, tho' you have not been my Cuſtomers, I make you all the ſame offer, whenever you ſhall have occaſion; and when I drive your Ghoſts to the River Styx, I ſhall ſhew you a very particular reſpect, all that is due to your extraordinary Merits. I have the honour to be, Your moſt humble and obedient,---and ſo forth. [*Exeunt Gameſters.*]

APOLLO.

I think, Mercury, we have fetched ourſelves up at laſt. We have done very well, every thing conſidered: Yet, 'tis wonderful, we have made moſt by thoſe for whom

I ex-

I expected leaſt. I really did not think theſe Authors worth the catching.

MERCURY.

You expect! What do You know of the World, and Men, and Manners? Could you think Homer himſelf would fetch ſo much in this Country, by a hundredth part, as a Pimp or a Gameſter?

APOLLO.

But 'tis time to go to Dinner. The Bookſellers will be impatient. Come, ſhall I ſhew the way?

MERCURY.

Apollo, you are the moſt thoughtleſs indolent fellow in the World. You are ſo addicted to your eaſe and pleaſure; and mind nothing but your Appetite. Don't you conſider what a deal of buſineſs we have ſtill on our hands? But I find I muſt continue the Drudge, and do every thing, or nothing will be done. Firſt, I muſt go to my friend the Broker, and bargain with him for thoſe Goods and Lumber we got for the holy Man. This affair admits of no delay. Then I muſt carry the celeſtial

Meditant, and C----d, Author of the Woman of Pleaſure, to the worthy and pious Lady who beſpoke them. She comes down a brace of Thouſands, that's poſitive; ſhe can't do leſs for ſo much Devotion and neſs joined together. We got one Thouſand for the Pimp. But 'twas well I invented that lie, otherwiſe the Bucks would have had C------d too, and made me diſappoint the worthy Matron. Laſtly, I muſt take the Profeſſor of Whiſt, and the Horſe-genealogiſt, to that fooliſh Bubble of a Lord, and get the Money for his Draught. All this will take me up two or three Hours at leaſt. Therefore, do you go to your Company, and to Dinner. Don't wait for me; I ſhall be with you before 'tis time to begin buſineſs. Should I ſtay rather too long, do every thing to preſerve the Bookſellers in good humour; drive the Bottle briſkly about, but above all things, keep yourſelf ſober, and make Them drunk, if you can.

End of the Second SCENE.

SCENE

SCENE III.

SPEAKERS.

APOLLO, MERCURY, BOOKSELLERS, BOOK-LENDERS, STATIONERS, PRINTERS, AUTHORS, WAITER.

SCENE *opens*, APOLLO, BOOKSELLERS, *&c. at Table, with Wine, &c. before them.*

BOOKSELLERS.

IT grows late. What a pox keeps Mr. Mercury? Can't we do Buſineſs without him?

APOLLO.

By no means; I am the wretchedeſt Auctioneer in the World. Beſides, the Authors are juſt now at Dinner; and 'twould be a pity to diſturb them: Moſt of them I believe, don't dine very often, at leaſt on ſuch good fare.

BOOKSELLER.

Authors at Dinner! Pray what have they got?

APOLLO.

APOLLO.

Only the broken victuals we left, which I ordered to be ſent them; and alſo, that they ſhould be ſupplied with what ſmall beer they called for.

BOOKSELLER.

A pox take them; they will ſtuff ſo, they will be good for nothing this week to come. I perceive, Apollo, you know nothing of the training and management of Authors. This very Dinner will lower their value five in the Hundred. Nothing is ſo bad for an Author as Repletion and Indigeſtion. It obſtructs his Powers, depreſſes his Invention, and benumbs his Imagination.

APOLLO.

What Regimen, pray, would you recommend for Authors?

BOOKSELLER.

No Author ſhould have above *one Meat-dinner a Week*; and that generally on a Sunday at a Sixpenny Ordinary, when he may be allowed to take a walk in the Country.

For

For the other days he ſhouldfeed on Peaſe-ſoup in the winter-time; in the ſummer on Cucumbers, or new Cheeſe and Radiſhes. I have hitherto taken care my Authors ſhall not exceed that Regimen. And whenever I invite them to dine with me, which is but ſeldom.------

APOLLO.

Indeed, I never heard of an Author dying of a ſurfeit at a Bookſeller's Table. Well, I ſee one is never too old to learn. But don't you think this diet muſt produce flatulencies, as bad on the other hand, as repletion?

BOOKSELLER.

By no means: You remember what Butler ſays of New-light and Prophecy. When they take that turn, they burſt forth into Odes, Eaſtern Tales for Magazines, declamatory Criticiſms in the Reviews, and ſo forth.

APOLLO.

Now you mention Magazines.----But you are all flinchers, Gentlemen; your glaſſes are half full; off with them for ſhame, and

I will name you a Toaſt, which I am ſure you will all pledge in a Bumper.

Another BOOKSELLER.

Flincher yourſelf 'Squire Apollo! I have obſerved you balk your glaſs frequently, and wink to the Drawer for a mixture of water.

APOLLO.

Indeed my good Friends, you muſt excuſe me. I have had a plaguy Rheumatiſm flying about me for ſome days paſt. Should I exceed in the Bottle, I am afraid it would fix on a noble Part.

BOOKSELLER.

Ha ha ha! I believe it has fixt on a very noble part already. You have got the faſhionable diſtemper, a touch of the Times, 'Squire Apollo; that's all.

APOLLO.

I wiſh, Sir, I could ſafely contradict you. Yet I hope not. I have been tolerably cautious. But there is no abſtaining altogether. Such charming Bona Robas; ſuch delicious Fleſh and Blood, as there is in this Country!

Delightful England, Land of lovely Dames!

my countryman old Homer would ſay.---But Gentlemen, we forget our toaſt, which is ſucceſs to Book-making in general, and to all News-papers, Journals, Magazines, Muſeums, Miſcellanies, Reviews, Records, Regiſters, Hiſtories, Voyages, Travels, and Tranſlations, in particular. I drink a bumper to the general toaſt, and each of you muſt drink a bumper to every one of the reſt. I inſiſt upon't. What don't you all ſhare in the profits one way or other? I would pledge you myſelf, but I am really not well, I won't diſguiſe it among my friends, I know you will keep it a ſecret; tho' I don't care, I have no wife, thank my ſtars.----Come, drink, drink. No evaſions, Mercury will be here by and by, and do you all juſtice. *(Here* Apollo *drinks a bumper, and the Bookſellers, &c. one each to every article above-mentioned.*

A BOOKSELLER, BOOK-LENDER, PRINTER, *and* BOOKBINDER, *who appear afterwards in the Epilogue.*

So, Squire Apollo you an't married you ſay. You are a happy being?

APOLLO.

Gentlemen I have obſerved of you in particular, that you don't ſeem to reliſh your wine. If it is not good I, ſhall break that Raſcal the Waiter's Bones.

BOOKSELLER, &c.

Nay, it is not that; your Wine is indeed ſuper-excellent. But our Wives---Not thinking we ſhould have the honour to dine with your Godſhip to day, we made our Wives expect us home to dinner, and ſhould they wait ſupper for us too, we know we muſt ſuffer ſeverely for it when we come within the Courtain.

APOLLO.

What afraid of a Curtain Lecture Gentlemen. A very wholeſome diſcipline tho', now and then. But don't be uneaſy, I ſhall diſpatch a Porter to tell your Ladies that you are here upon buſineſs, and that they need not to expect you.

BOOKSELLER, &c.

That won't do neither, did they know we were here, pox take them, they would be after

after us in a hurry, and hawl us home by the neck. Let them find us out. Come give us t'other Bumper----Now let them come; we ſhould ſend them home with a flea in their ear.

APOLLO.

Well thought on Gentlemen, Wine helps to render folks valiant in more rencounters than one. But what a plague keeps this Mercury? I fear the Rogue has got along with ſome of his Miſtreſſes.

BOOKSELLER.

Pray Apollo, beſides wenching, is not Mr. Mercury a little addicted to fibbing too? I ſuſpected his adventure with the old Bawd to be ſomewhat apocryphal; and I am certain he has never written a Comedy as he told us.

APOLLO.

What makes you think ſo, Mr.----?

BOOKSELLER.

Why if he had, he would not have uſed our Managers in the manner he did. They will never act a play for him as long as they live. Mr. G----- in particular will never

forgive him. He was really too close and severe upon the dear little Man, as he called him. I confess I am no mighty admirer of his Prologues and Epilogues: But Mr. G------ is a great man for all that, a very great man indeed.

Another BOOKSELLER.

That is no affair of ours, Brother. Let us mind our own Business. If Mr. Mercury has written a Comedy, I shall print and publish it for him, without asking leave of the Managers. But as it has not been acted, he cannot expect any Copy-money for it. If I sell five hundred, I shall make him a present of a Beaver-hat, or so, to make him remember me.

APOLLO.

Really Gentlemen, I know nothing of the Matter. Mercury has not consulted me about it, and I never heard of his Comedy before to-day. But if he has such a thing, I am persuaded, he will print and publish it himself; for he hinted to me some time ago, as if he intended to turn Bookseller.

PRINTERS,

PRINTERS, STATIONERS, *and* BOOK-BINDERS.

We are glad to hear that. He will cut out freſh work for us,

BOOKSELLERS, BOOK-LENDERS. [*In ſurprize.*]

How Mercury turn Bookſeller! He is---- he is not in earneſt we hope: What the Devil makes him diſpoſe of his Authors then?

APOLLO.

I aſk you pardon, Gentlemen; but you lie under a ſmall Miſtake. The Authors are not Mercury's but mine. He only ſells them for me, and I allow him the uſual Commiſſion on what they fetch.

BOOKSELLERS *and* BOOK-LENDERS.

What ſort of Authors are they? They muſt be good for little, otherwiſe he would buy them himſelf.

APOLLO.

Alas! Gentlemen he has got no Money, and I know him too well to give him Credit. Should he actually turn Bookſeller, do you all Gentlemen, take care how you deal with

with him, particularly you Printers and Stationers: For I fancy he will be a great Book-maker. But this I tell you as Friends, under the Roſe. As to what you aſk about the Authors, I really can ſay nothing. I know none of them, never had any dealings or connexion with them, nor ſaw one of them till to-day, when they paſſed in review before me. But Mercury, who muſt know them intimately, having caught them, and who has no intereſt to deceive me in this article, tells me they are all excellent in their ſeveral kinds, and diſtinct walks of learning and genius.

A BOOKSELLER, *Publiſher of Hugh Clarendon's Hiſtory.*

Truly, as to what Mr. Mercury ſays, I would not value it a proof ſheet, or the cover of a weekly number. I ſaw enough of him to-day. He cried up all his Authors alike, and after puffing them off moſt extravagantly, was glad to take half a guinea, or a quarter, for the beſt of 'em.

APOLLO.

That was only when he acted for me as Auctioneer. But pray Sir, when ſaw you the

the Honourable Hugh Clarendon, or the Honourable Edward Seymour? I hope their Honours are well.

BOOKSELLER.

They were very well, I thank you, the laſt time I ſaw them.

APOLLO.

I believe ſo, indeed. But pray what have you done to Mercury? He is in a deviliſh paſſion againſt you, let me tell you that. About a fortnight ago, during the bittereſt weather, he took a jaunt out to Richmond and Windſor, on very particular buſineſs, as he ſaid. He came back late at night, froſt-bitten, almoſt ſtarved to death, and curſing and ſwearing like a trooper: I have known him theſe three thouſand years, and I never heard him ſo profane before. His anger, as I could find, was directed againſt you, but he would not, for all my entreaties, tell me the reaſon, leſt, he ſaid, I ſhould laugh at him. Then he would damn himſelf all of a heap, for a fool and a nincompoop, and You for a rogue and a raſcal, threatning what he would do to you. But

here

here he comes------Now friend, I would adviſe you, if you are conſcious of having played him any trick, to make the beſt of your way quietly, before he ſees you. O heavens! how he would uſe you, were he to hear what you juſt now ſaid of him. He is deviliſh paſſionate when provoked, and a deſperate bruiſer into the bargain. Broughton is a mere chicken to him.

MERCURY.

Gentlemen all, your moſt obedient. You muſt excuſe me. Buſineſs of the utmoſt importance kept me.---You Waiter, a tumbler, a decanter of water, quickly.----- Aha, my dear friend, *(to the Publiſher of Hugh Clarendon's Hiſtory, who is ſneaking to the Door)* have I caught you at laſt? Pray be ſeated again, my good Sir: You and I have ſome accounts of a very particular nature to ſettle before we part, but I ſhall not interrupt the good humour of the company at preſent. You Waiter, take care this gentleman does not make his eſcape; if he does, you ſhall anſwer for him with your bones. Remember that, Sirrah.

APOLLO.

APOLLO.

Mercury, we were beginning to think we had loſt you.

MERCURY.

Faith, I was beginning to think ſo myſelf. I had like to have been raviſhed ſince I ſaw you. I have had the Devil and all to do to get my money from that Lord's Steward, and myſelf from that Lady of Quality. The Steward is as great a rogue as his Maſter is a fool. I am well aſſured he frequently lends my Lord his own money, and makes him pay intereſt and advance for it too. The raſcal had the impudence to demand twenty five per Cent. diſcount on his Lordſhip's draught, for prompt payment, ſwearing that he had no money of my Lord's in his hands, and that he advanced it out of his own pocket. I knew this to be a confounded lie, but I was obliged to compound with the villain for five. Then I went to the Lady of Quality, and 'tis a moſt generous old ſoul; ſhe paid me my demand ſo readily, and with ſuch goodwill, that I was ſorry immediately afterwards I had not aſked her double the ſum.

She was ſo kind and loving too, that, had not the *Celeſtial Meditant* been there, I know not what might have happened. After ſwearing by the river Styx to viſit her to-morrow, I left her at her devotions with Mr. H----y, and when ſhe has done with him, ſhe hears a lecture on the other ſcience, from Mr. C-----d. Were ſhe ſomewhat younger, and did not her breath ſmell quite ſo ſtrong of Ratifia, I ſhould make a good adventure of this, at leaſt I ſhould be better diſpoſed to it.----But I am plaguy thirſty. You drawer, another cup of water.

BOOKSELLER.

Thirſty indeed Mr. Mercury, but only for water. Here have we, out of complaiſance to Apollo, been drinking bumpers upon bumpers, till we begin to ſee double faith, and all in the hopes that when you came you would do us juſtice; and you do us juſtice in water. We excuſed Apollo, becauſe he is not well; he has been dabbling in Covent-garden, you underſtand me, among unſound wares. But you have no ſuch plea, and we inſiſt on your doing us Juſtice, Glaſs for Glaſs;

Glaſs; there was one for Magazines, another for Muſeums, another for Reviews, another for ——

APOLLO, *to the Bookſeller.*

The Devil's in you, I think. You are a fine fellow to be truſted with a ſecret. Here you have blown me to Mercury, the verieſt blab among the Deities, who will blaze my misfortune all over Olympus, ſo that Venus and the Graces, nay the Muſes, won't let me come near them henceforth.

MERCURY.

A pleaſant jeſt this, i'faith. Gentlemen I inſiſt on your doing me juſtice in the firſt place. You muſt go to my friend the old Lady of Quality, and drink as many glaſſes of Ratifia with her as I did, and pledge her through an infinite ſeries of Cordials, as I was obliged to do. 'Tis that makes me ſo thirſty. Do this, and then talk to me of your wiſhy waſhy Claret. Juſtice quoth'a!

APOLLO.

For heaven's ſake, my friends, have done with your diſputes about drinking, and pro-

ceed to buſineſs. Beſides, here are ſome of our beſt friends who are very anxious to return to their Wives, and their Wives are equally uneaſy about their abſence. Perhaps miſcarriages may be the conſequence.

BOOK-LENDER, *drunk.*

What, twi-twit us about our Wives, Apollo! De-de-damn our Wives.

BOOKSELLER, *drunk.*

Ay, ſo ſay I. Here, I'll give a toaſt, which you ſhall pledge Mr. Mercury. Here's confuſion to all Wives, ay and to all Huſbands too.

PRINTER, BOOKBINDER, *drunk.*

A bumper toaſt, a bumper toaſt. You ſhall all take it off in a brimmer.

MERCURY, *Aſide to Apollo.*

Come, you have managed them tolerably well. I perceive they are all about half ſeas over, juſt a proper cue for bidding. But we muſt not let them drink any deeper, leſt they be diſabled to execute their notes of hand and ſign their names.—To order Gentlemen, to order, and let us proceed to buſineſs.

BOOK-

BOOKSELLER.

Damn order, and damn buſineſs. Here's another general toaſt my lads. Here's confuſion to order and buſineſs, and ſucceſs to whoredom and adultery. Apollo ſhall drink this. I ſay he ſhall. Though he be p-xt, what's that to us. If he can't drink, he ſhould not come and ſpoil good company. Here's no reſpect of perſons, Gods or Devils. I'm a free-born Engliſhman, and loves to ſpeak my mind. Mercury, give me your fiſt, you're an honeſt Buck, and no flincher. I wiſh we had ſome of your old Lady's cordials here, or, as they ſay you are an excellent pimp, could you not get us ſome wenches?

BOOK-LENDER, PRINTER, BOOK-BINDER.

Another bumper toaſt. Here's confuſion to whoredom, and ſucceſs to adultery.

APOLLO, *aſide to Mercury.*

O Lud, O Lud. I have gone to far with ſome of them. But 'tis only theſe poor cuckoldly married devils that are ſo riotous and unruly. You'll make them ſo-

ber

ber enough if you threaten them with their Wives.

MERCURY.

O fy, men of your years, rank, and ſubſtance, creditable houſe-keepers who have ſerved all the pariſh offices, to behave at ſuch a tearing rantipole rate. If you won't be quiet, and attend to buſineſs like good boys, I ſhall inſtantly ſend for your Wives, and let them ſee what blades you are when from under their protection. Perhaps they will bring you to order, tho' I cannot.

BOOKSELLER, BOOK-LENDER, &c.

O dear Mr. Mercury, do not ſend for our Wives, and we will be very good indeed. We ſhall not open our mouths, but when bidding for your commodities.

MERCURY.

Now I like you again. As ſoon as buſineſs is done you may be as wicked as you pleaſe. Bid luſtily, and get the ſale quickly over, and you ſhall all have wenches a-piece. You ſhall faith; you ſhall pick and chuſe the very prime of Harris's liſt, and I will procure them for you myſelf.

Now

Now for buſineſs; Waiter, bring out a ſet of Authors; the News-mongers in the firſt place.——Here my good friends, are the moſt neceſſary and uſeful Authors in the world. Authors who inform all the world what all the world is doing. But do you ſee how ſpruce, decent, and genteel they are. Such Authors are fit to be ſeen on change, in any coffee-houſe or drinking-room in London. They are even entituled to drink a pot of Porter with a nobleman's footman, or Tea with a lady's woman, by which they may learn many material articles of intelligence; as for inſtance, when my Lord cut his corns, or my Lady took a glyſter, how many coaches they had at their laſt route, what money was loſt or won, and ſo forth. Then for bloody murders, aſſaſſinations, highway robberies, I defy the world to match them. In deaths and marriages they are inimitable. They bury Squire ſuch-a-one to-day, and on the next ſend him down to his country ſeat with a grand retinue: they marry a grand couple this week, and the week after declare the marriage premature. But in the for-

tunes

tunes they beſtow on the young married ladies, they are moſt liberal and munificent. Eight, ten, twenty thouſand, to one who never ſaw a Bank Bill. They ranſack Joe Miller for thread-bare Jeſts, and work them up a-new, moſt delectable reading in ale-houſes. Then for Ch-th-m, the East India Company, and the price of proviſions, they will write both *pro* or *con*, on either ſide of the queſtion, under names moſt claſſically compounded from the Greek or Latin. It would be impoſſible, gentlemen, to enumerate all their great qualities. I have eight or nine Sets, you ſhall have them at ſo much a Set, or by the lump, as we can agree.

Now for my Magazine-mongers. Here are rather more parcels of them, conſiſting of Poets, Eſſayiſts, Novelliſts, Hiſtorians, Divines, in ſhort, Profeſſors in all branches of Science, even Orators, who make ſpeeches in Parliament, and yet were never there. They ſhall go in the ſame manner, ſo much a parcel, or all by the lump.

BOOKSELLER.

Pray Mr. Mercury, have you got any Atheiſts among your Magazine-mongers?

MER-

MERCURY.

Atheiſts! Mr. ------ you ſurprize me. Surely you would not print an Atheiſtical Magazine in a Chriſtian Country?

BOOKSELLER.

Quite the reverſe; I want a Chriſtian Magazine, for this Chriſtian Country.

MERCURY.

And you would employ Atheiſts to compoſe or collect it?

BOOKSELLER.

Juſt ſo. The very beſt hands in the world. Indeed the only fit ones for it.

MERCURY.

So, by the ſame rule, if you wanted an Atheiſtical Magazine, you would employ Chriſtians?

BOOKSELLER.

Undoubtedly, and thoſe the very rankeſt. Methodiſts, the moſt enthuſiaſtick diſciples of G.....Wh....d.

MERCURY.

But why ſo pray? I always thought it a recommendation to a work, that its Au-

thor was well acquainted with the ſubject, or even had made it the ſtudy of his life.

BOOKSELLER.

That is a vulgar error, an inveterate prejudice, which we comply with, as far as is needful, by affirming that it is ſo in the title-page or preface. But ſhould it really be ſo, we ſhould find this great inconveniency attending it. An Author thoroughly maſter of his ſubject, is apt to take all his own way, to demand too much money for his labour, and likewiſe to earn it too eaſily. Whereas an Author entirely ignorant of what he writes on, or who ſubmits to write contrary to his own conviction and ſentiments, is under our direction in every thing, is intirely dependant upon us, and being ſenſible of his own incapacity, is contented with any ſmall pittance we chuſe to give him.

MERCURY.

All theſe are great advantages, I muſt acknowledge. But then, don't you find them greatly over-balanced by a leſs extenſive ſale?

BOOKSELLER.

By no means; for what with taking Title-pages, of which we are generally the Authors ourſelves, what with perpetually puffing and advertiſing in our own news-papers and periodical publications, and above all, by diſperſing our copies among one another over all the town and country, we never fail to diſpoſe of any impreſſion, how numerous ſoever.

MERCURY.

So then, when you publiſh a Tour thro', Great Britain or Europe, or a Voyage round the World, it is not to be ſuppoſed, whatever may be ſaid in the Title-page, that the Author was ever either a Traveller, or a Circum-navigator.

BOOKSELLER.

By no means: on the contrary it would be better he had never been beyond the Bills of Mortality, or out of his Garret. It would both make it come cheaper and be ſooner done. You Mr. Mercury, who are the God of Merchants, muſt know that a

quick return of Money is the principal thing in trade.

MERCURY.

But ſtill why Atheiſts? beſides, I believe there is a Chriſtian Magazine already; tho' I don't ſee the proprietor of it among my good Cuſtomers.

BOOKSELLER.

'Tis very true, Mr. Mercury. But then that Magazine, I am told, is written by real Chriſtians, and as I intend to ſet up a new Chriſtian Magazine, in oppoſition to the old one, I am perſuaded, could I procure downright Atheiſts for my Compilers or Authors, I ſhould ſoon knock it up, tho' it has ſubſiſted many years. I am ſure I ſhould be able to underſell the preſent proprietors, for my Atheiſts would, as I have ſhewn you, write much cheaper on that ſubject, than any Chriſtians could undertake, or even afford to do.

MERCURY.

I believe it Sir; and I am very ſorry that I can't ſupply you with a ſet of Atheiſts. It is impoſſible that I, an Immortal God,

can

can be acquainted with ſuch people. But I believe there may be, among ſo many Magazine-mongers as I have got, a great many indifferent about all Gods, and all Religions. You are welcome to pick and chuſe.

BOOKSELLER.

Well, ſince I can get no better, I muſt be ſatisfied; though I ſhould certainly prefer downright Atheiſts above all others, for authors of my Chriſtian Magazine.

MERCURY.

Come Gentlemen, don't let me ſtand higgling and chaffering with you, as I was obliged to do with thoſe fooliſh chaps before dinner, who know nothing of Authors, books, or buſineſs. Let us fix a price on every ſeparate parcel at once, and do you lay down the money, or give your notes for it.

APOLLO.

Some of our beſt and moſt ſubſtantial cuſtomers are I ſee ſomewhat caſt down. Mercury you muſt encourage them. They are afraid of being taken to taſk by their wives

for

for not going home to dinner as was expected.

MERCURY.

What Gentlemen are your Wives diſobedient and unruly? I ſhall manage them for you. I ſhall take every ſoul of them with me to the river Styx to night. They ſhall trouble you no more.

The married BOOKSELLERS, BOOKLENDERS *&c.*

No no Mr. Mercury, we do not want to get rid of our Wives altogether. They are good Women enough in the main. Only a little too anxious and careful about us, that's all. But as you have a magick Wand with which you can make people ſleep when you pleaſe, we wiſh you would lay them in a profound repoſe before we go home to night, otherwiſe we ſhall have a terrible curtain lecture indeed.

MERCURY.

Say no more, it ſhall be done. Be of good cheer therefore and bid like men of ſpirit. Gentlemen I value my Authors at a hundred Guineas a ſet. I won't take a farthing leſs, but as much more as you pleaſe.

BOOK-

BOOKSELLERS.

O Mr. Mercury that's a great deal too much. Do but conſider.

MERCURY.

Don't tell me to conſider. I conſider that you can't do without them, and that without them your profitable manufactories muſt abſolutely be ſtopt. Apollo ſhall draw out the notes, and if you don't immediately ſign, expect the ſame treatment that the Roman King met with from the old Sybil. I ſhall diſmiſs one third of 'em, and demand the ſame price for the remainder.

BOOKSELLERS.

Well, ſince it muſt be ſo——

MERCURY.

Aye Gentlemen, ſign away. Conſider they are now abſolutely your own; and that you may train, manage, and diet them as you pleaſe.

BOOKSELLER.

Mr. Mercury, I ſee but one ſet left for me, and I want to have two Magazines.

MER-

MERCURY.

Pooh, a Bookſeller to make a difficulty about ſuch a trivial affair! Can't you print two titles to the ſame magazine. Nobody will find it out, and if they ſhould -----

BOOKSELLER.

Truly, Mr. Mercury, I perceive you are not ſo ill qualified to be a Bookſeller, as I thought you were during your converſation with my brother here, who beſpoke the Atheiſts.

MERCURY.

Ay, you and all your Brethren may perhaps be ſoon better ſatisfied as to that ----- Now Gentlemen, I exhibit my Reviewers and Recorders, two or three ſets of them only, the Kings, the Princes, the Dictators, the Legiſlators of the common-wealth of Letters. They ſhall exhibit a ſpecimen of their powers in the exerciſe of their ſeveral offices of Condemning and Approving, and doing both and neither. ----- Come Mr. Critick condemn us a Work inſtantly, and to the purpoſe, and be ſure always to ſepe-

rate

fate the *bran of mediocrity* from the *superfine flour of Compoſition.**

REVIEWER.

A catch-penny thing! We Reviewers who are obliged to wade thro' ſuch paltry execrable Stuff!—— 'Tis well the Paper is ſo ſoft and pliable. ——

MERCURY.

Moſt admirably witty indeed. Beſides he informs people where they may find waſte paper for certain occaſions. Proceed my good friend.

REVIEWER.

Since we undertook the office of Reviewers, we have had frequent experience that it is far more dangerous to tickle Aſſes than to drub them. For behold! inſtead of ſeeing the animals lick our hands, they ſet up a braying, kick out and throw dirt in our faces, only for ſtroking inſtead of threſhing them.

MERCURY.

A moſt humourous ſtricture indeed*, and

* A favourite phraſe in the Reviews.

† The above, together with a great deal more ſtuff to the ſame purpoſe, about their Authority and

quite in the ſtile and manner of Monſ. Bayle and le Clerc, the firſt projectors of Reviews. Now to commend a Work.

REVIEWER.

We have carefully peruſed this tranſlation, and *We* have diligently compared it with the original, and *We* find it in many places ſuperior in point of perſpicuity. *We* pronounce this performance to be the beſt of the kind *We* have yet ſeen, and *We* ſtrenuouſly recommend it to all engaged in this *walk* of Literature.

MERCURY.

Obſerve Gentlemen, the royal emphatical *We*, without *We*, *we* ſhould be nothing. Now let us review in another manner, which is neither this nor that, but both or either. We will review Lexiphanes.

REVIEWER, *(aſide to Mercury.)*

How ſhall *we* review that? Shall *we* commend or condemn it.

their Court of Criticiſm, is called in the Index to one of the Reviews, *humourous Strictures on the Temple of Gnidus, a Poem*, from which there is not ſo much as one line to juſtify the ſtrange Cenſures paſt upon it.

MER-

MERCURY.

A Reviewer who would either do juſtice to the public, or to a performance he has under conſideration, ought to give a ſhort and judicious abridgement and analyſis of it, ſetting forth in as few words as poſſible, the plan and intention of the Author, and at the ſame time ſelect ſuch ſpecimens as may beſt illuſtrate his Stile and Compoſition. Beſides, this Work being profeſſedly an imitation of Lucian, it ought to be carefully compared with the Original, obſerving how far he has deviated from it, or improved upon it. But this would give you too much trouble, and I doubt likewiſe your capacity for doing it. So I would only have you to tranſcribe the argument, and mark down any paſſages that come firſt in your way for ſpecimens. Then as to condemning or commending it. To be ſure, you would chuſe to condemn it.*

* I had, in the poſtcript to Lexiphanes, when treating of the cauſes of the late and preſent decline of taſte among us, condemned perhaps too raſhly and indiſcriminately all periodical publications, and among the reſt Magazines and Reviews. It is for this reaſon chiefly, that Mercury ſays in the text.

But, tho' not much ſought after, not being calculated for the mob of Readers, yet I know it is highly approved by ſome few, and

To be ſure you would chuſe to condemn it. As for *Magazines*, it is evident that in the original method of carrying them on, ſo far from being prejudicial they were on the contrary highly uſeful, preſerving as their name implies, and collecting into one body, beſides other valuable things, little fugitive pieces of wit and humour firſt printed in News-papers and other periſhing publications. But when thro' the arts and avarice of Bookſellers they were multiplied to an enormous number, no leſs than a dozen coming out at one time in this town alone, and at the ſame time pretended to entertain the world with original productions, it is no wonder that they degenerated, and became, if I may uſe the expreſſion, *literary nuiſances*. Yet it muſt be confeſſed that the two firſt of the kind, I mean the *Gentleman's* and the *London*, are ſtill valuable, having deviated leaſt from the plan on which they firſt ſet out. And as for Reviews, or *Literary Journals*, no doubt men of great eminence both at home and abroad have been concerned in ſuch undertakings. This is ſufficient to defend them from an undiſtinguiſhed cenſure, and what evinces their utility, at leaſt the general opinion of Mankind that they are uſeful, is their ſtill continuing to ſubſiſt in ſpite of the ſlovenly bungling manner in which they ſeem to be executed at preſent. Mercury, in the ſpeech to which this note relates, firſt ſhews the manner in which a literary

thoſe men of taſte and learning; on this account it may not be quite proper to damn it in the lump. Therefore I would have you take the middle way; commend it in one line and damn it in the next; ſo that the judgment you paſs on it may be taken in either ſenſe, like my brother Apollo's oracles. But if you obſerve the ſmalleſt impropriety, tho' it ſhould proceed only from an error in the preſs, be ſure to mark That.

REVIEWER.

Though we think this Author inexcuſable for his unfair repreſentations, and his † *illiberal* treatment of Dr. Johnſon, and ſeveral

rary Review ought to be carried on, but at the ſame time pretending to queſtion the capacity of his Criticks, for their greater eaſe and convenience recommends to them that lazy futile method, which it cannot be denied, they generally follow.

† 'Tis really a pleaſant jeſt to obſerve Reviewers blame any Author for *illiberal treatment* of another. When they do ſo, it may truly be ſaid that *Clodius accuſat Mœchos*, and they ought to be reminded of this famous text in Scripture. *Thou Hypocrite* &c. They are indeed like the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* in the Goſpel. Theſe Retailers of Literary Abuſe by the month, ſeem fond of this favourite branch of traffic, even to a degree of jealouſy, and want to monopolize

other reſpectable Authors we cannot but commend him for endeavouring to explode the uſe of hard words and pedantic expreſſions. Yet, when this is done, writers are equally liable to corrupt their ſtile by vul-

nopolize it entirely. They are exactly like Sir Roger de Coverly in the Spectator, who would ſuffer no body to ſleep at Church but himſelf. They aſſert, that the Author of Lexiphanes is inexcuſable for his unfair repreſentations and his *illiberal* treatment of Dr. J-----n. But I defy them to ſhew one inſtance wherein this Writer is *unfairly repreſented* in that performance. I own indeed that I have parodied him, but the reaſon I give for it (ſee Lexiphanes p. 74 in the note) is perhaps the higheſt compliment that can be paid him. And as for what is ſaid with reſpect to him in the Dialogue, they would find there is nothing *illiberal* in it, were they pleaſed to conſult Lucian, of whom, for any thing that appears to the contrary, they are entirely ignorant, or to conſider the nature of the compoſition, which is properly a comical dramatick repreſentation, and allows many liberties not juſtifiable in a grave dogmatical criticiſm, ſuch as one of their Reviews, where every one muſt grant they daily take greater. I may have called him, in ſome of the Notes, a *pedantick old School-boy*, but I can only wiſh for the honour of our country, where he has ſome how or other acquired ſo great a name, that there were leſs truth and juſtice in the appellation.

gar

gar idioms, and ungrammatical phraſes. This Author falls into many inaccuracies.

'Sure to *fall foul of*.'--- 'a paper *or ſo*.'--- '*had became*.'--- 'between *you and I*'.--- '*give into* the caricatura a little *now and then*'.--- 'I waſh my hands *on't*.'--- are expreſſions which may be deſervedly called *colloquial Barbariſms*.

APOLLO.

Pray Mr. Reviewer, don't you think *had became* muſt have been an error of the preſs? Such a phraſe as, Waſh my hands *on't*, is frequently uſed in comedy; *on't* * is only a contraction for *of it*, and as for all the reſt,

* *Waſh my hands on't.* This pretended Critick has no where ſhewn greater ignorance of the Engliſh idiom, than in condemning this phraſe as a *colloquial barbariſm*. *On't* is generally uſed for *of it*, eſpecially by our old Writers in Comedy, and the Familiar ſtile: and that it is really nothing elſe than the contraction of *of it*, appears from this, that when it is uſed for that, they never ſay *on it*; as for example, they always ſay *glad on't*, *diſpoſe on't*, but never *glad on it*, *diſpoſe on it*; whereas when uſed for *on it*, or where *on it* may be equally proper with *of it*, they ſay indiſcriminately *think on't*, *conſider on't*, or *think on it*, *conſider on it*. The reaſon of this departure from the analogy ſeems to be, firſt, becauſe it has a pleaſanter ſound

but one, I won't take your word for their being, what you call them, *colloquial barbariſms*.

MERCURY.

Proceed Mr. Reviewer, don't mind him. He's a fool.

REVIEWER.

'A performance committed to the foſtering care of a diſtinguiſhed character,' is what he himſelf would ſtile a Lexiphaniciſm.

MERCURY.

Aye, that he would; ſo he would 'edition of an author in *expectancy*.' — '*ſanctioned* by authority,' — and innumerable others.

APOLLO.

But conſider, Mr. Reviewer, that beſides miſquoting that paſſage, it is in the very

ſound than the regular contraction *of't*; and next, to avoid the *ambiguity*, too frequent in all languages, particularly our own, I mean its being miſtaken for *oft*, the contraction of *often*, or *frequently*. No doubt, it was at firſt, taken from converſation, or was, according to the preſent phraſe, *colloquial*. But pray what was the origin of all languages?

firſt

firſt ſentence of the dedication, and when an unknown Author preſumes to addreſs a great Man, ſtill leſs diſtinguiſhed by his rank and fortune than his learning and talents, and eſpecially without his knowledge or permiſſion*, methinks he cannot do it in too ſolemn and reſpectful a manner. This Author ſays, the ſtyle ſhould always be ſuited to the ſubject, and one principal reaſon why he

* This was really the caſe with reſpect to my Dedication of Lexiphanes to Lord Lyttleton; yet I ventured on it, becauſe I was convinced there was nothing in it his Lordſhip could well take amiſs, eſpecially as I had not run into the fault ſo commonly laid to the charge of all Dedicators, that of beſtowing extravagant and undeſerved praiſes and encomiums on their Patrons, which in fact expoſe both to ridicule. This however was hardly poſſible to be done in the preſent caſe, but ſo far from attempting it, I had omitted, not ſo much thro' inattention, but becauſe it did not relate immediately to my plan, one of his Lordſhip's principal, and indeed almoſt peculiar excellencies as a writer. I mean *that quality of knowing when to have done, and of never ſaying too much on any ſubject; nay, indeed of letting the Reader ſometimes think, that enough is not ſaid, not that it really is ſo, but becauſe he wiſhes more had been ſaid.* I have had occaſion to obſerve this quality ſo rarely in moſt Authors, that I know not whether I have expreſſed myſelf clearly.

is ſo ſevere on Johnſon, is that the Doctor uſes his pompous Lexiphanick expreſſions in weekly Papers, intended for the amuſement of common readers.

MERCURY, *aſide to Apollo.*

Can't you be ſilent? What the plague have you to do with the matter? O Heavens what a blundering Auctioneer you are! To cry ſtinking fiſh, and depreciate your own wares! They would ſerve you right not to give you a farthing for theſe Reviewers. I muſt interpoſe I ſee.

I told you Mr. Reviewer, Apollo was a fool. You perceive he does not ſo much as pretend to juſtify *between you and I**, which

* An ingenious Gentleman, engaged at preſent in a tranſlation of Lucian, and who, I have reaſon to believe, is every way qualified for the taſk, has taken notice of this phraſe, "between you and *I*," after the following manner, in a letter to the Author. *It would be a great pity*, ſays he, *if any impropriety could be found in Lexiphanes: perhaps moſt people will think "between "you and I" ſhould be altered to "between you and "me."* But he had done me the honour to ſay before, *that the ſolemn paces of Lexiphanick Writers are moſt admirably expoſed, while the good ſenſe of the Critick is communicated in words the moſt perſpicuous, natural and ſignificant.*

between you and me is a moſt vile phraſe, a *barbariſm*, the moſt *colloquial*. He might as

nificant. This makes me flatter myſelf, that he had perceived no other impropriety, and that he imputed *had became*, as every man but a Reviewer would do, to its proper cauſe. But as our wou'd-be Critick has twice taken notice of this error of the preſs, how came he to rank it among his *colloquial barbariſms?*

As it is evident he does not know what a *colloquial Barbariſm* means, though a favourite cant expreſſion with ſuch people, and a name which they commonly give to all phraſes which they want to condemn, I ſhall here define it for him. "It is an irregular and "ungrammatical manner of ſpeaking, actually uſed "among polite company and men of letters, in care-"leſs and familiar diſcourſe, and hence, thro' inat-"tention or ignorance, ſometimes for variety, or even "thro' neceſſity, introduced into writing." Now in thoſe verbs whoſe *perfect tenſes* and *participles* differ, we frequently uſe in converſation the *participle*, improperly, for the *tenſe* in ſome verbs, and the *tenſe*, improperly, for the *participle* in others; but never the one for the other indiſcriminately in the ſame verb. For inſtance, we frequently ſay, ſuch a man *begun* to build, inſtead of *began*, but I never heard it ſaid, even among the moſt illiterate, he *had began*, or it *was began*. In the ſame manner we ſay, the cattle were *drove*, inſtead of *driven*, but I know not that, I *driven*, or, he *driven*, is ſo much as a *provincial barbariſm*. And even for the firſt expreſſion, in both examples, there are ſuch great authorities, that I ſhould think that man a *mere*

Reviewer

well say *between you and we*. *Between you and I*—— quoth'a!

Reviewer indeed, who found much fault with an Author, eſpecially a Poet, for uſing it even in this age of *literal criticiſm*. I refer the Reader to the Engliſh Grammar, ſaid to be written by a moſt learned and judicious Prelate, where he will find this topick handled with great accuracy and preciſion. Now it happens moſt unluckily for this poor Critick's *colloquial Barbariſm*, that *became* is one of thoſe verbs, whoſe *participle* is ſometimes uſed for the *tenſe*, but the *tenſe* never, even among the loweſt vulgar, uſed for the *participle*. Had I any where ſaid, that "Lexiphanes, "after having defined a Penſioner to be a Slave hired "to obey his maſter, *became* a Penſioner himſelf." I ſhould have given it up for a *colloquial barbariſm*, as frankly as I give up *between you and I*. But *had became* is a ſoleciſm, a *barbariſm* of any ſort, but the *Colloquial*, and had I knowingly uſed it, I muſt have acknowledged myſelf as incapable of writing Engliſh, as this Reviewer of criticizing it.

After obſerving that I throw the prepoſitions and the ſigns of the caſes to the end of the ſentence, ſuch as, fond *of*, attained *to*, joined *in*, rely *on*, by which I ſuppoſe he means the vulgar idioms afterwards mentioned, he has this extraordinary piece of criticiſm. "Engliſhmen, *We* believe, are the only peo-"ple of the world who uſe this form of expreſſion. "*We* ſhould think a Latin author guilty of a moſt "abominable abſurdity, if he ſhould cloſe his peri-"ods with *de*, *ad*, *cum*, *in*, *ſub*, *fine*, or any other

"word

REVIEWER.

We think *we* have him there indeed. Beſides Mr. Mercury, there is *had became,*

"of word this nature." This Critick, knowing ſo little of his mother tongue, may be well excuſed for his ignorance of Latin, and all others. He muſt never have met with *mecum, nobiſcum, &c. &c.* He goes on, "And why do we continue to follow this "prepoſterous arrangement?" Why indeed? Becauſe it is the peculiar idiom of our language, and frequently gives a happy variety to our ſtile, adapting it to the different nature of different compoſitions. Beſides thoſe little particles, which, being joined to other words, alter and vary their ſenſe, and are called *prepoſitions* in Latin, becauſe in that language they are generally placed before words, ought in ours to be called *poſt-poſitions*, becauſe they are as generally placed after them. And I will maintain, that *join in, rely on, bring in, &c* are as legitimate compounds, as the Greek and Latin words correſponding to them, and that an Engliſhman who cloſes a period with ſuch a compound, is guilty of no more abſurdity than a Greek or Roman. Nay more, it may be ſaid they are as much one word, at leaſt they are moſt frequently ſo in ſpeaking, and are only through the prevalence of cuſtom ſeparated to the eye in writing and printing. And the beſt manner of ſpeaking ought ever to be the ſtandard of writing. For what is the latter, in reality, but a downright imitation of the former? For inſtance, what is a Declamation,

MERCURY.

'Tis very true, they may call *had became*, an error of the preſs if they will, but *We* Re-

mation, but an imitation of an Orator haranguing the people; a Treatiſe on moral or natural Philoſophy, of a Profeſſor teaching his Pupils; an Eſſay or Weekly Paper, of a Gentleman who entertains a ſelect company with his thoughts on any ſubject, expreſſed in a ſhort eaſy and familiar manner; and a Dialogue, of ſo many perſons met together in company, and diſcourſing on ſome particular topic? This was moſt evidently the caſe with the Ancients; all whoſe works, even their Hiſtories, were pronounced or ſpoken before they were read. And as the Orator, Profeſſor, Gentleman and Company, all uſe a different ſtile, ſo ought the writers of Declamations, Philoſophical Treatiſes, Eſſays and Dialogues. But theſe egregious Criticks would confine us to one uniform ſtile and manner in all compoſitions, I ſuppoſe that of their own dull paltry Reviews. In ſhort, they ſeem all to be of my Hero Lexiphanes's clan, of whom I have heard it ſaid, intentionally to his great praiſe, that he always ſpeaks in company as if he were ſpeaking out of a book.

Our Critick, after writing in the royal authoritative ſtile, a ſtring of *We's*, goes on in the ſame majeſtick manner, "The next time this Author writes, "LET him favour US with his thoughts on vulgar "idioms and barbarous expreſſions." To this I anſwer, that when I come to think the Reviewer, who

viewers admit of no ſuch apology†. So I think we have now ſufficient foundation to condemn it all in the lump, and to knock this Lexiphanes down with a moſt ſtinging ſentence in the concluſion.

REVIEWER.

Ay, that *We* will, and here it follows.---- This Author very juſtly declaims againſt affected Phraſes; but the next time he writes, let him favour us with his thoughts on vulgar idioms and barbarous expreſſions, which are more offenſive to a judicious reader, than all the hard words which he has attempted to expoſe*.

who ſkulks behind the pompous and royal pronoun WE, knows what vulgar idioms and barbarous expreſſions are, I will then favour his pedantic Majeſty with my thoughts on them.

† Nothing is more true than what Mercury aſſerts in this place: and the Reviewers never fail to mark ſuch paſſages in a different character from the reſt of their extracts, not as what they are, typographical blunders, but blunders of the Author; unleſs he may happen to be a favourite with them, and one whoſe productions, to ſpeak in their own ſtile, *We have often peruſed with great pleaſure and ſatisfaction.*

* It is now that the *cloven foot* moſt evidently appears. And this Critick, hitherto afraid to avow himſelf,

MERCURY.

Bravo, bravo. The buſineſs is now done, and 'tis very certain that *between you and I*, himſelf, nay pretending the contrary, proves to be at laſt a Lexiphanes in his heart, and undoubtedly has a tender fellow-feeling and ſympathy with Dr. Johnſon and others of that Stamp. Nay, 'tis great odds but in ſome florid declamations, or bulky voluminous Hiſtory now deſervedly neglected and thrown by, which perhaps was the only reaſon why they were not expreſsly referred to in that piece, that he has ſhewn himſelf a compleat Lexiphanes, almoſt on a par with the *celebrious* Doctor himſelf, and that he has ſeen ſome of his own favourite expreſſions, and moſt *delicious morſels of Eloquence* expoſed in the Rhapſody, and ſmarted ſeverely under the ridicule beſtowed on that Character in the dialogue. Without this ſuppoſition, 'tis hardly poſſible to account for his concluding his Review with an expreſs condemnation of a work, to which he has been able with all his good will to make ſo few, and thoſe ſuch paultry inſignificant objections.

If I miſtake not, the following challenge was lately thrown out in a preface to one of the Reviews. "We "defy, ſay they, or in words to that purpoſe, any of "our bittereſt enemies to point out to us one perfor-"mance which we have condemned, and which ſtill "ſubſiſts in any tolerable degree of credit with the "publick."

This no doubt is intended as a convincing proof of their great impartiality, and profound ſagacity in criticiſm.

and *had became*, are infinitely worſe than all the hard words and abſurd Phraſes that are raked together in Lexiphanes's Rhapſody.

ticiſm. But how far it ought to ſerve that purpoſe we may eaſily learn from their treatment of Lexiphanes, ſhould that Dialogue acquire and maintain any reputation among Men of taſte and letters, the only perſons who can thoroughly reliſh a work of that nature. A Reviewer would very readily ſay, "*We* greatly commended that performance; *We* declared it was written with ſpirit and acuteneſs, and that it might be attended with a good effect." On the contrary ſhould it die and be forgotten and ſhare the ſame fate with the numberleſs other productions daily teeming from the preſs, he might ſay with equal juſtice, "*We* abſolutely condemned that Work, for the Author's many vulgar idioms and barbarous expreſſions were more offenſive to a judicious reader than all the hard words which he had (only) attempted to expoſe. Beſides, *We* declared him utterly inexcuſable for his unfair repreſentations and *illiberal* treatment of ſuch a reſpectable Author as Dr. Johnſon." From this one would really be apt to think they had actually conſulted Mercury, 'tis certain they have literally followed his advice, and ſquared their Review after the model of Apollo's oracles. But ſo little am I acquainted with modern productions and the reviews of them, that I am not able to ſay whether in many other inſtances they have followed the ſame oraculous

Such, gentlemen, are our Reviewers, and ſuch their multifarious powers. What ſhall we put them up at? We have got two Parcels. You may call the one Critical and

ſee-ſaw method: tho' I think it moſt probable that they have.

I had inadvertently thrown out in Lexiphanes ſome general cenſures on Reviewers, which like all cenſures of that ſort may be well or ill founded; I was on reflection ſorry for it, and I am now equally ſorry that this Reviewer has in a great meaſure juſtified them. I do not at all complain of his want of Candor, for I own I had no title to expect any favour from him, but of the ſlovenly manner in which he has performed the taſk aſſigned him, like a mere labourer indeed. It is not therefore out of reſentment that I have made ſo many ſtrictures, but becauſe it afforded me an opportunity to explain my ſentiments on ſome particulars reſpecting the Engliſh language, wherein theſe Reviewers are ſo egregiouſly miſtaken, and ſo apt to impoſe upon many by the bold ſelf-ſufficient manner in which they conſtantly expreſs themſelves. At the ſame time it may have ſome influence in making them alter or correct their preſent method of procedure; or if it ſhould fail of that, at leaſt as far as its circulation may extend, it will inform thoſe, who, from their ſituation in the country and their diſtance from the capital, have frequently no other method of learning the character of Books than from Reviews, what reliance is to be had on their judgement.

the

the other Monthly if you will. You ſhall have them at the ſame price, as the Manufacturers of News and Magazines. ------ Should they fail as Reviewers they are ſtill good for ſomething. They are excellently well qualified to become Correctors of the preſs. What would the Author of Lexiphanes have given had his Reviewer corrected the firſt ſheet of his dedication; he would have prevented that monſtrous Blunder of an *a* for an *o* in *had became.*

Commas and Points they ſet exactly right,
And 'twere a Sin to rob them of their Mite.

BOOKSELLER.

How's this? I have got my Wife here amongſt my Reviewers. I have no notion of purchaſing at ſo great a price what was mine before, by all the laws of God and Man, This is a downright fraud; I ſhall ſuffer my note to be proteſted and ſtand trial. At any rate I ſhall have relief from Chancery.

APOLLO.

What Sir! do you repent of your purchaſe? Here, take your note again. I will have no law-ſuits. You Waiter, carry this Gentle-

woman to my Lodgings at the Bagnio. She ſhall be my bed-fellow to night. That toad Polly F----- has jilted me, and made an aſſignation with the keeper of Newgate. The ſaucy Jade ſent me word, that truly ſhe preferred a Goal-keeper to a God who paid ſo indifferently.

MERCURY.

Sir, this will prove the luckieſt adventure in the world for you. What mayn't we expect from ſo poetical a Father and ſo critical a Mother? Another Bentley at leaſt, or a ſecond ------- who may in time write a new Legation or a new commentary on Shakeſpear. He will be all your own, for *partus ſequitur ventrem*. Or, what do you ſay, ſhall I try my hand upon her? Perhaps from our conjunction will ariſe a very eminent Juſtice of the Peace, and Thief-catcher..

Another BOOKSELLER.

I would adviſe you Brother to take your wife, and let them keep your note. You have ſurely heard that Squire Apollo is p-xt, and for my own part, I don't believe Mr. Mercury a jot better. A couple of con-

founded

founded rakes; I know I would ſooner give them half a dozen notes, than that either of them ſhould lie with a wife of mine.

APOLLO.

Well friend, what is your reſolution? Your Wife or your Note?

BOOKSELLER.

I muſt take the former, I think.

MERCURY.

So we are all ſatisfied, and ſhall have no law-ſuits. ----- And now Gentlemen, I ſpeak to You my Worthies who are Book-lenders, and keep circulating libraries. Againſt the next reading Seaſon, I mean the Winter, I have provided a choice collection of Authors for you, who ſhall write you novels and romances without number, ſuch as Miſs Delia Stanhope, Miſs Indiana Danby, and I know not how many other Maſters and Miſſes, Ladies and Lords, all paragons of perfection and miracles of beauty, who, after ſurmounting difficulties inſurmountable, are all happily married at laſt, and beget children upon children; moſt exquiſite reading for your worthy Subſcribers. Apollo and I want a little

little ready caſh at preſent, and you ſhall have them a great penn'orth at ten pieces a head, provided you pay the money down--- And now I come to my Geographers, my collectors of voyages and travels, my general Biographers, my Britiſh Plutarchs and my Dictionary writers of all ſorts. They are all put up in ſeparate lots and parcels, and you ſhall have them at the ſame price, and on the ſame conditions with the Reviewers and News-mongers. Here are the Notes, which, Gentlemen, you will pleaſe to ſign. Their works will ſell wonderfully when retailed in ſixpenny Numbers, among journeymen Taylors, and people of that ſort. You muſt make intereſt with the Landlords of the houſes of call. I have known the Carpenters at one houſe take off ninety of one publication. My Hiſtorians only remain, whom I want to diſpatch, for I grow hoarſe with this Auctioneering. Here are too Scotch Hiſtorians, Mr. A----w H-----n, a real proteſtant, and W-----m G----- Eſquire, a reputed P-p-ſt, at leaſt ſo Maſter A---w calls the Squire. But I have not been able, do all I could, to find out the two Engliſh Hiſtorians, the Honourable

able Edward Seymour, of Richmond Eſq; and the Honourable Hugh Clarendon, of Windſor, Eſquire. Methinks I ſmelt a rat ſome time ago. You Mr. ----- who publiſhed the Hiſtories of theſe Honourable Gentlemen, I muſt have a little talk with you.

BOOKSELLER.

O Mr. Mercury, Dear Mr. Mercury, forgive me but this time, and I will never play you ſuch a trick again.

MERCURY.

Prithee, what art thou crying and blubbering at, Fool! What trick haſt thou played me, Friend?

BOOKSELLER.

Only by ſending you out to Richmond and Windſor, as Squire Apollo tells me, in ſuch cold bitter weather, whereby if you had not been an immortal God you would have loſt your life on a fool's errand, in ſearch of two Authors that never exiſted but in my own brain. And now I am on my penitentials, I muſt confeſs to you, hoping for mercy, that theſe two Hiſtories or rather one Hiſtory, is all written by an Hireling Author

thor of my own, whom I ſee you have got in your collection, and whom I have chriſtened at ſeveral times by theſe two different names, in order to make my Hiſtory ſell---that was all.

MERCURY.

Well an't you a great rogue now? I ſuſpected as much, after I had ſearched every nook and corner of thoſe places to no purpoſe. Certainly had I met you on my return from that confounded jaunt, I ſhould have given you a moſt unmerciful drubbing, perhaps broken every bone in your ſkin. But my paſſion has had time to cool, and one rogue ſhould not be too hard on another. On the contrary, I admire your ingenuity, that you, a poor wretched mortal, who have ſerved but a few years apprenticeſhip to Roguery, ſhould be able to deceive and overreach Me, who have been verſed in all ſorts of it for theſe many thouſand years paſt. I confeſs I had a great opinion of your hiſtory from ſeeing it ſo dexterouſly puffed off, and expected to have made a great deal of money by the ſale of the honourable Hugh Clarendon. But, as you ſay I have got the real

Author

Author in my poſſeſſion, you muſt give me your note of a Hundred Guineas for him, as the reſt of your brethren have done for others. Come, on that condition I will freely forgive thee.

BOOKSELLER.

Alas, Mr. Mercury, that condition is very hard, and would almoſt ruin me. I would, rather than comply with it, be content to take a ſmall drubbing at your hands. Do, beat me a little for the trick I play'd you, but not too ſeverely. My brother Bookſellers have detected me, they have publickly denied the exiſtence of my two Honourable Hiſtorians, maintained the identity of my two hiſtories, and envious of my ſucceſs have expoſed me in the news-papers all over the kingdom. From four thouſand, which I lately ſold, I don't expect in a few weeks to ſell above four hundred. I ſhall loſe money by it, at laſt. Do then let me off with a ſmall beating, I beſeech you.

MERCURY.

What! your brother Bookſellers detect and

expoſe you.* 'Twas very unbrotherly and unfriendly doings in them. How would they like to be ſerved ſo themſelves? I ſhrewdly ſuſpect, were ſtones to be thrown at you by thoſe only who have ever been guiltleſs of ſuch like practices, you would fare like the Woman in the goſpel, have none thrown at you at all. Come brother Rogue, be of good cheer, hold up thy head man, and don't whimper and take on at that rate. You ſhall have no beating from me, I aſſure you; let thoſe beat you who have bought your Hiſtory. You and I are too much of a kidney to quarrel in good earneſt. Come, ſign this Note, as I deſired you, and you will

* 'Tis certain that no people in the world have more intereſt than bookſellers in detecting, expoſing, and even diſcouraging, as far as lies in their power, all ſuch fraudulent ſcandalous proceedings. It fixes, with many, an indelible ſtain on their profeſſion. I would not therefore have any one think that Mercury, in the paſſage referred to, ſpeaks the ſentiments of the author; he only ſpeaks agreeably to his own Character. I believe there are many Bookſellers as much above ſuch practices, as a reputable merchant would be above ſending, knowingly, a cargo of ſophiſticated damaged goods to his foreign correſpondent.

yet

yet do very well. I ſhall put you in a way to laugh at them all, and make your Hiſtory ſell better than ever.

BOOKSELLER.

Ay, Mr. Mercury, on that condition I ſign with heart and good will. But what is your expedient pray?

MERCURY.

It is this. I hereby lend you my *Name*, and hereby give you liberty to make uſe of it, as you ſee beſt for your advantage, as many celebrated Authors have done before me, fathering works they had as little connection with as I have with your Hiſtory. A few months hence, or when convenient, I would adviſe you to republiſh this ſame identical Hiſtory a third time, under the following title, with any puffing addition you may think proper. A complete Hiſtory of England, from the Invaſion of Julius Cæſar, and ſo forth, written by the Honourable, or rather the Divine HERMES MERCURY, of Olympus, Eſquire. And then let me ſee any Dog of 'em all come there to enquire after me, or preſume to controvert my exiſ-

tence. I ſhould ſoon give them convincing proofs on't with this good fift.

Now Gentlemen I would beg leave to aſk you one queſtion with reſpect to your ſixpenny projects in Weekly Numbers. But you muſt anſwer me faithfully, without the ſmalleſt evaſion or mental reſervation.

BOOKSELLERS.

You may depend on our compliance.

MERCURY.

I have frequently obſerved in your preliminary advertiſements when you are uſhering in a new important weekly publication for inſtance a New Dictionary of Arts and Sciences, a Commentary on the Bible, or any thing of that ſort, which to be ſure is infinitely preferable, and corrects the numberleſs miſtakes and blunders of all the preceding ones, and is undoubtedly compoſed by the moſt eminent and ſkilful perſons in their ſeveral departments; I have obſerved I ſay, that you conſtantly give out, that this moſt valuable and uſeful work is all compleat and ready for the Preſs; that it will be regularly publiſhed every Saturday, after ſuch a day, and

that

that it will be comprized in ſuch a certain fixt quantity of Numbers. Pray now is all this true, and do you keep up to all your engagements?

BOOKSELLERS.

Why really we cannot ſay that, ſtrictly ſpeaking, it is always ready for the preſs, it is however always ready—— in the heads of our Authors. For as they are always pay'd according to the quantity they ſpin, ſhould a thing happen not to take, we ſhould be all that pay out of pocket, which however ſmall, you know muſt be ſomething in the way of trade. But then we take care to keep them ſpinning in ſuch a manner, that a number never fails to be ready at the appointed time; for a failure in that reſpect would knock up a weekly publication entirely.

MERCURY.

Aye, but then do you never exceed the number ſtipulated?

BOOKSELLERS.

That is juſt as it happens. If a work does not take at all, we generally knock it up

up after two or or three publications. If we are too far engaged to recede, we continue it, and after it is forgotten under its original title, advertiſe it a freſh under a new one, and as a new publication altogether. But then if it ſucceeds beyond our hopes, which ſometimes is the caſe, we iſſue out orders to our Authors to ſpin as fine as poſſible; moſt welcome news to them, as the more ſheets, the more pay: and thus it may ſometimes exceed double the number promiſed.

MERCURY.

All very prudently done, I confeſs. But then I have likewiſe obſerved, that provided it go beyond the ſtipulated number, you frequently engage to deliver the overplus to the ſubſcribers gratis. Pray do you really keep that promiſe?

BOOKSELLERS.

We perceive Mr. Mercury, that you think us all a parcel of fools. What do you ſee in our faces that makes you imagine we ſhould pay Authors, buy paper, print it, and all that, for nothing. We thought you had conceived

conceived a better opinion of our underſtandings. That promiſe is only a bait to make the Gudgeons bite. Once we have hooked them in with ſo many Numbers, our ſubſcribers are obliged to go on, or loſe all the money they have already laid out with us.

MERCURY.

But then I am perſuaded they have an action at law againſt you, and that you would find that promiſe binding and obligatory in a court of juſtice.

BOOKSELLERS.

Pſhaw. You know nothing of the world, Mr. Mercury, for all your boaſting ſo. What do you think a Journeyman Taylor, Bricklayer, or any ſuch fellow, would go to law with us rich Bookſellers for the matter of twenty Shillings or ſo? If he did, we ſhould bail the action and ſoon ruin him with the expences.

MERCURY.

Well, I ſee if I turn Bookſeller I muſt ſerve a pretty long apprenticeſhip to the trade. I find I am not Rogue enough; neither am I acquainted

acquainted with half the rogueries of thoſe who profeſs it.

Now Gentlemen having happily concluded our buſineſs, let us ſit down to take a ſerious Bottle. There ſhall not one of you ſtir, I proteſt; you muſt all ſpend the evening with us, and I ſhall take care that it be in mirth and jollity. What diſmiſs ſuch good friends and cuſtomers with empty bellies and dry lips! Waiter, more Wine here, and order Supper to be got ready. Send for Girls too, one for each of us, but let them be the prime ſtuff of the garden, the very choice and picking of Harris's liſt*.

* Finding this piece has ſwelled to a greater ſize than was at firſt intended, I have been obliged to leave out a very conſiderable part of the Dialogue which came in at this place. However, tho' connected with the foregoing, it was rather a dialogue of another ſort, being of the deliberative kind, and might be called the *Choice of Mercury*, in imitation of the Choice of Hercules. For in the interval between the concluſion of the Sale, and the arrival of Supper and the Ladies, Mercury declares his reſolution of abandoning Heaven, being quite tired of the drudgery to which he is ſubject there, and of taking up his reſidence in this country, the land of liberty. And being determined to quit

all

BOOKSELLER.

Mr. Mercury thou'rt a true Buck and no churl I find. But one Girl a piece only! It is but ſeldom I do theſe things, but when I do, it is to ſome purpoſe. I muſt have a brace, that's poſitive. Bett Flauntit, and Doll Tearſheet, are my particular favourites.

MERCURY.

I am glad to ſee thee ſo vigorous, old Boy. But take care that thine eye is not bigger than thy belly. Well, I love variety myſelf, but I have always found one Woman ſufficient for me, at a time. Waiter you hear

all his former occupations, except that of Ghoſt-driver, and pimping only occaſionally for his friends, he conſults with the Bookſellers what other profeſſion he ſhould follow by way of livelihood. And after balancing *pro* and *con*, the advantages and diſadvantages of ſeveral, ſuch as Patriot and Miniſter of State, Juſtice of Peace and Thief-catcher, Eaſt India Director, Stock-jobber, Overſeer of the Poor, Gameſter and Methodiſt Preacher, he fixes at laſt on that of Bookſeller. He informs the Company of his literary projects, which are almoſt innumerable, and agrees to enter into partnerſhip with his good friend the Publiſher of the Honourable Hugh Clarendon's Hiſtory of England.

what this Gentleman ſays. You'll provide as many ladies as you can. Perhaps there may be others of the ſame voracious appetite with my friend here.

WAITER.

I will do every thing in my power to oblige your Godſhip, who have been ſo generous a Maſter to me. But I am afraid moſt of the ladies are gone to the Play. 'Tis a very full houſe at Drury Lane. Mr. G----- acts to night.

MERCURY.

What's this you tell me Sirrah? Did not I order you to confine him, and keep him under lock and key?

APOLLO.

'Tis very true Mercury; and if there is any blame it muſt fall upon me. He beg'd very hard, this being one of his benefit nights, and while you were abſent I let him out on his parole of honour. The little man was ſo thankful, that he has faithfully promiſed me to compromiſe the difference between you, and to act your Comedy without

any

any conditions, not even that of his writing the prologue and epilogue.

MERCURY.

Very well: but remember you are anſwerable for him to me; and, as it happens, I have value enough of yours in my hands.---Come, my lads, puſh the bottle about, here's to the old Health; the Ladies will be with us preſently to pledge it.

STATIONER.

Look ye Mr. Mercury, I have no objections to join with you in a drunken frolick or ſo, once and away; my Wife does not mind that, I know. But this ſending for Girls-----She's a very termagant, and plaguy jealous. If this adventure ever come to her knowledge, I ſhall never hear the laſt on't. Yet, I ſcorn to be a flincher and to ſpoil good company. Here's to the old Health in a bumper.

MERCURY.

Still upon your Wives, gentlemen! I thought you had all ſaid long ago, *Wives begone, here's none but ſouls.* Have I not given you my word that none of them ſhall

ſalute you with a curtain Lecture when you go home? You will find them all faſt aſleep, by that time. But then, to-morrow morning, if you do not apply the Reconciler in a proper manner, and make them ample and ſufficient amends for this neglect of duty over night, remember I will not be anſwerable for them. You muſt look to that yourſelves.

WAITER.

My Gods and Gentlemen, Supper is on table in the next room.

BOOKSELLER.

Pray, are the Ladies come, friend?

WAITER.

The Porter is gone for them Sir, and they will be preſently with you. I hear them coming up Stairs.

MERCURY.

Then hey for Flauntit and Tearſheet, old Boy! Gentlemen, I will ſhew the way.

EPILOGUE.

EPILOGUE,

In the Style and Manner of David Garrick, Eſq;

Scene opens, and diſcovers a long Table, with bottles of Wine, Bowls, and Glaſſes, Apollo at one End, Mercury at the other, and on each Side, Bookſellers, Book-lenders, thoſe who keep Circulating Libraries, Bookbinders, Printers, Stationers, and Ladies of the Town, all ſitting promiſcuouſly, and moſt of them half drunk. Waiters attending.

BOOK-LENDER.

APollo, here's your Health.--Bu-buſs me Poll.

BOOKSELLER.

As our own Shakeſpear has it, kiſs me Doll.*

PRINTER.

We've done to day ſome buſineſs.---Ah! you huſſy
Come to the corner here, and I will tuzz ye.

* *Our own*, and *your own* Shakeſpear, is a very common phraſe among our theatrical gentry. My admired original, in his excellent Epilogue to the Clandeſtine Marriage, has given him a new epithet of *little Shakeſpear*, which, it may be, his great name will render faſhionable. They are likewiſe very fond of quoting this Poet, and producing his authority on every occaſion, even as trivial as the preſent, of *Kiſs me Doll.*

See Epilogue to Engliſh Merchant, parodied here.

BOOK-

BOOK-BINDER.

Your Godſhips (buſs me) have pickt up ſome money.
I wiſh you Joy. Another Buſs, dear Honey!

BOOKSELLER.

You ſmack ſo ſweetly, Doll.--Ha! Raſcal Waiter,
You that for Bucks, and Nymphs of Pleaſure, cater,
Where is Miſs Flauntit? I am ſure I ſent you.

DOLLY.

So then, you Scoundrel, one cannot content you?

BOOKSELLER.

Tho' poxes threaten, and tho' noſes fall,
Your's are my heart, ſoul, blood, brains, guts and all.*
Then, prythee, Dolly Love, be not ſo jealous.

DOLLY.

I jealous, think you, of ſuch pimping fellows!

BOOKSELLER.

Go! you're a dirty Jade.

DOLLY.

And you're an Aſs.

1ſt LADY.

Come, Squire Apollo, let the Bottle paſs.

2d LADY.

But in the Bottle there's no Wine, Alas!

* Tho' Pill'ries threaten, and tho' Crabſticks fall,
urs are my heart, ſoul, pen, ears, bones, and all.

3d LADY.

3d LADY.

The tinkling Bell let Squire Mercurius ring.

4th LADY.

I'm tir'd—a Chair—And here a Bottle bring.‡

PRINTER.

What do you love all Liquors?*

1ſt LADY.

No not Porter.

And naſty Ginn.

BOOK-BINDER.

Is not fit for a Courtier.

BOOKSELLER.

Yet hear me Dolly, and attend to Reaſon.

DOLLY.

A Woman of my Rank!—'tis petty Treaſon.†

‡ I'm tir'd --- a chair --- here take my capuchin:
Epilogue to Clandeſtine Marriage.

* COL. TRIL.

What do you love all muſick?

MRS. QUAVER.

No, not Handel's,

And naſty Plays ---

LORD MIN.

Are fit for Goths and Vandals.

Ditto.

† See the beginning of the Epilogue to the Engliſh Merchant, almoſt word for word.

Hear

Hear Reason Bockhead!—Reason!—what is that?
Bid me wear Pattens and a high-crown'd Hat.
Won't you be quiet? What want you? What's
your view?

BOOKSELLER.

Humbly to serve fair Beauty's Queen ---- *in You.*
I muſt entreat you—

DOLLY.

I renounce ſuch things,
Not Venus now, but Vengeance ſweeps the Strings.
I'll daſh at all, and tear them with my Grinders;
Printers, Book-lenders, Bookſellers, Book-binders.‡

PRINTER to BOOKSELLER.

She'll weigh the matter, if of Gold you hint t'her.

DOLLY.

I'll weigh no matter, and I hate you, Printer.*

BOOKSELLER.

Is not Miſs Flaunti at the Play?

WAITER.

My Trull

‡ To daſh at all the ſpirit of my trade is,
Men, women, children, parſons, lords and ladies.
Epilogue to Engliſh Merchant.

* SPATTER.

I humbly thank you Ma'am --- but weigh the matter.

LADY ALTON.

I won't hear reaſon, and I hate you, Spatter. *Ditto.*

But

Has made a party, Sir, to get a Cull.*
But She will come.†

BOOKSELLER.

When?

WAITER.

—— When the Play is done.
I left your Meſſage.

BOOKSELLER.

We ſhall have good Funn.

PRINTER.

I hate a Play-houſe—Buſs—it makes me ſick.

1ſt LADY.

Hold off your Hand, Sir.

PRINTER.

'Tis a rare odd Nick.‡

* C. TAIL. Is not Miſs Crotchet at the Play?
MRS. QUAV. My Niece
Has made a party, Sir, to damn the piece.
Epilogue to Clandeſtine Marriage.

† MISS CROT. But we ſhall damn it.
LORD MIN. When?
MISS CROT. To-morrow night. *Ib.*

‡ LORD MIN.
I hate a Play-houſe—Trump—It makes me ſick.
1ſt LADY.
We're two by Honours, Ma'am.
2d LADY. And we the odd Trick. *Ib.*

BOOK-LENDER.

News. News. Here comes Miſs Flauntit from the Play.*

2d LADY.

If ſhe be come, then we have loſt the Day.

PRINTER.

What ſaucy Raſcal's this, that's ſo uncivil,
As bounce in on us?

Enter Printer's Devil.

PRINTER'S DEVIL.

Sir, it is your Devil.
I come from Miſtreſs. All your Wives together
Are now a brewing, Gentlemen, foul Weather.
They've order'd me to ſee you all away,
And bring you home to them without delay.

PRINTER *and the other three.*

Go, tell our Wives we all are very buſy.
But tell them not, it is with Tuzzy-Muzzy.

PRINTER'S DEVIL.

And think you with ſuch anſwer I can ſham 'em?

1 LORD MIN.

News. News. Here comes Miſs Crotchet from the Play.

MRS. QUAVER.

Well, Crotchet, What's the News?

MISS CROT. We've loſt the day.

Epilogue to Clandeſtine Marriage.

PRINTER.

PRINTER.

Then tell 'em Damn 'em!

BOOKSELLER.

Damn 'em!

BOOK-LENDER.

Damn 'em!

BOOK-BINDER.

Damn 'em! †

But here comes Flauntit.

WAITER.

No, it is your Wives.
O run and ſkulk, and hide ye for your lives.

Here Bookſeller and Booklender get under the Table, Printer and Book-binder hide behind the ſkreen. Enter Miſs Flauntit.

Miſs FLAUNTIT.

I come obedient to the Waiter's call, §
From fore to back-ſide, to ſalute you all;

Turns round

† Miss CROT.

Such is the Play----Your Judgment. Never ſham it.

C. TRIL. Oh! Damn it.

Mrs. QUAV. Damn it.

1ſt LADY. Damn it.

Miss CROT. Damn it.

LORD MIN. Damn it.

Epilogue to Clandeſtine Marriage.

§ I come, obedient at my Brethren's call,
From top to bottom to ſalute you all;

Warmly to wiſh whene'er my Piece you view,
A happy Night to You, *Bookſellers*
You, *Book-lenders*
You, *Book-binders*
and You. *Printers*
Say you, who've felt my paces, known my ſprings,
Are we Town-ladies ſuch inſipid things?
You lords of wit, Bookſellers, Binders, Lenders,
Attack us, and you'll find us ſtout defenders;
We'll ſee who'll win the palm, have at you all,
Great You, or We who conquer when we fall.
Againſt Your thund'ring Pikes, whene'er you want it,
I'll lift --- my leg; come on! and parry Flauntit.*
Sets herſelf in a Poſture of Defence.

Warmly to wiſh, before our piece you view,
A happy year to You, You, You, and You.
Bowds. Pit. 1ſt Gal. 2d Gal.
Prologue to Cymon.

* You, who have ſeen my actions, known my ſprings,
Say, are we Women ſuch inſipid things?
Say, lords of the creation, mighty men!
In what have You ſurpaſs'd us? where? and when?
I come to know to whom the palm is due;
To Us weak veſſels, or to ſtronger You?
Againſt your conquering ſwords, I draw --- my fan,
Come on! and parry Marg'ret if you can.
Sets herſelf in a Poſture of Defence.
Epilogue to the Earl of Warwick.

Excuſe me, Gemmen, I ſo long did ſtay,
I had a great deſire to ſee the Play,
Where Garrick, that ſweet, little, Rhyming Rogue,
Spoke what he'd wrote, a charming Epilogue.
I died with laughter, 'twas ſo droll and pat.
'Twas all about a *Meaſter*, *Mon*, and *Cat*.*

BOOKSELLER, and the other three, *having left their hiding Places, addreſs Miſs Flauntit, firſt conjointly, then ſeparately.*

Printer, Book-binder, Bookſeller, Book-lender,
Have at your ſervice, each a Tickle-bender.
Tho', dear and lovely Flauntit, on our lives,
When you came in, we thought it was our Wives.

BOOK-BINDER.

I'm a Book-binder, and I know not whether
You ſhould be bound in Calf, or in Sheep's Leather.
Yet I will ſtitch you up, and bind you well.
But, as I'm married, do not kiſs and tell.

MISS FLAUNTIT.

Give me a Guinea, and you ſhall not want it.

CHORUS of LADIES.

Spoke like a Girl of ſpirit, dear Miſs Flauntit.

PRINTER.

I am a Printer, and, my lovely Laſs,
I wiſh I had you ready for the Preſs.

* See the Epilogue to Barbaroſſa.

I would

I would imprint you, and impreſs you well.
But, as I'm married, do not kiſs and tell.

MISS FLAUNTIT.

Give me a Guinea, &c.

CHORUS of LADIES.

Spoke like a Girl, &c.

BOOK-LENDER, *ſtuttering.*

I'm Be-Book-lender, if you'll be-befriend me,
I'll take you to my ſhop, and then le-lend ye.
'Mo-mong Subſcribers you will circ'late well.
But, as I'm married, do not kiſs and tell.

MISS FLAUNTIT.

Give me a Guinea, &c.

CHORUS of LADIES.

Spoke like a Girl, &c.

BOOKSELLER.

I'm a Bookſeller, and my beauteous Bunter,
I wiſh I had you open on my Counter.
You're a fine Copy, and I'm ſure will ſell.
But as I'm married do not kiſs and tell.

MISS FLAUNTIT.

Give me a Guinea, and you ſhall not want it.

CHORUS of LADIES.

Spoke like a Girl of Spirit, dear Miſs Flauntit.

STATIONER.

STATIONER.

Well, faith and troth, this Flauntit is no fool.*

WAITER.

I'm glad you like her, Sir.—He's a good Cull.
aside.

PRINTER'S DEVIL.

My dear Miſs Flauntit when you op'd the Door,
I thought you was, and find you are my Whore.
I'm Printer's Devil, and his Proof-ſheets carry,
I love you Flauntit, and I will you marry,
You know I've lov'd you long, and ſerv'd you well.
But as you like it, you may kiſs or tell.

MISS FLAUNTIT.

Come to my arms, my ſweet and lovely Devil;
You are my fav'rite Man, and I'll be civil.
Without a Farthing you ſhall never want it.

CHORUS of LADIES.

Spoke like a Girl of Spirit, dear Miſs Flauntit.

STATIONER.

Well, faith and troth, this Flauntit is a fool.*

WAITER.

I think ſo too, this Devil's no good Cull.

* SIR PAT. MALONY.

Well, faith and troth, that Shakeſpear was no fool.

C. TRILL.

I'm glad you like him Sir—So ends the Fool.

Epilogue to Clandeſtine Marriage.

BOOKSELLER.

BOOKSELLER.

Well, here's a plot now, that I can't unravel,
But 'tis a precious Raſcal this ſame Devil. §
Theſe Turtles to the Gin-ſhop fly with ſpeed, †
And I'll foretell the curſed life they'll lead.
With gin and porter drunk they face all weather,
And whore and rogue, trudge arm in arm together.
Now play at Puſh-pin, now at Jack-a-dandy,
Forever tippling either Beer or Brandy.
Like dull Mill-horſe one round awhile they keep,
They bite, ſcratch, quarrel, drink, then fall aſleep.
Their cuſtom always in the afternoon.
He black as *Ink*, and ſhe the *Change-full Moon*,
Wak'd with their brandy, Madam firſt begins,
She rubs her eyes, the Devil rubs his ſhins,
She ſips and ſwears 'next week's our wedding day,
'I wiſh old Nick had blown me *(hiccups)* then
away."
'Ay damn ye (cries the Devil) here's the Curſe,
'We now are tackt--for better *(hiccups)* and for
worſe."
Then ſhe Cull-hunting to the Garden trudges;
He to the Garret where poor Poet lodges.
Flauntit gets poxt, the Devil picks a pocket;
She goes to Lock, the Devil goes to Lockit:

§ O 'tis a charming Raſcal, this ſame Spatter.
Epilogue to Engliſh Merchant.

† Our Turtles from the Town, &c. ... *to the end of the Epilogue to the Engliſh Merchant.*

Noſe-

Noſe-fall'n and ſcabb'd, we turn from her with loathing;
Now dies the Devil dancing upon nothing.
What means this Qualm? Why ſure while I'm deſpiſing
That vulgar Paſſion, Envy, is not riſing.
O no---Contempt is ſtruggling to burſt out.
I'll give it vent, and whiſk theſe Jades about.
Here he drives about the Girls.

1ſt LADY.

An't you aſham'd Sir? *

BOOKSELLER.

Me! I never bluſh.
With little Flauntit, faith I'd take a puſh.

BOOK-LENDER, in Recitative.

While we have Money we need never want it;
Why ſure there are more Ladies here than Flauntit.

BOOKSELLER, in Ditto.

Brother, *c'eſt vrai, me foi,*---I've one in Petto,

* MRS. QUAV. to SIR PAT. MALONY.
A'nt you aſham'd, Sir?
SIR PAT. Me! I never bluſh,
For little Shakeſpear, faith! I'd take a puſh.
Epilogue to Clandeſtine Marriage.

With whom I'll join and play at a *Duetto*.†
For this *Signora, O Amico mio,*
She will not join and let me play a *Trio*.

CHORUS of all the BOOKSELLERS &c. in Ditto.

Come, do not let us whine like lovesick Asses,
But raise our Spirits high with willing Lasses.
What shall we give, dear pretty Rogues, to win ye?

CHORUS of all the LADIES in Ditto.

A Guinea, Guinea, Guinea, Guinea, Guinça.

CHORUS of BOOKSELLERS, &c.

What shall we do t'enhance your joys and blisses?

CHORUS of LADIES.

Come kiss us, kiss us, kiss us, kiss us, kiss us.

Exeunt Omnes, Kissing.

† MISS CROT.

Colonel, *de tout mon Cœur*, I've one in *Petto*,
Which you shall join, and make it a *Duetto*.

LORD MINUM.

Bella Signora, e Amico mio,
I too will join, and then we'll make a *Trio*.

Reluctant to Clandestine Marriage.

THE END.

Lately Publiſhed, written by the ſame Author, and dedicated to Lord Lyttleton,

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A

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